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21 SPINE-TINGLING

Fifth Edition
Roleplaying Game

NO. 25
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TALES OF



5e

TERRO

FEATURING



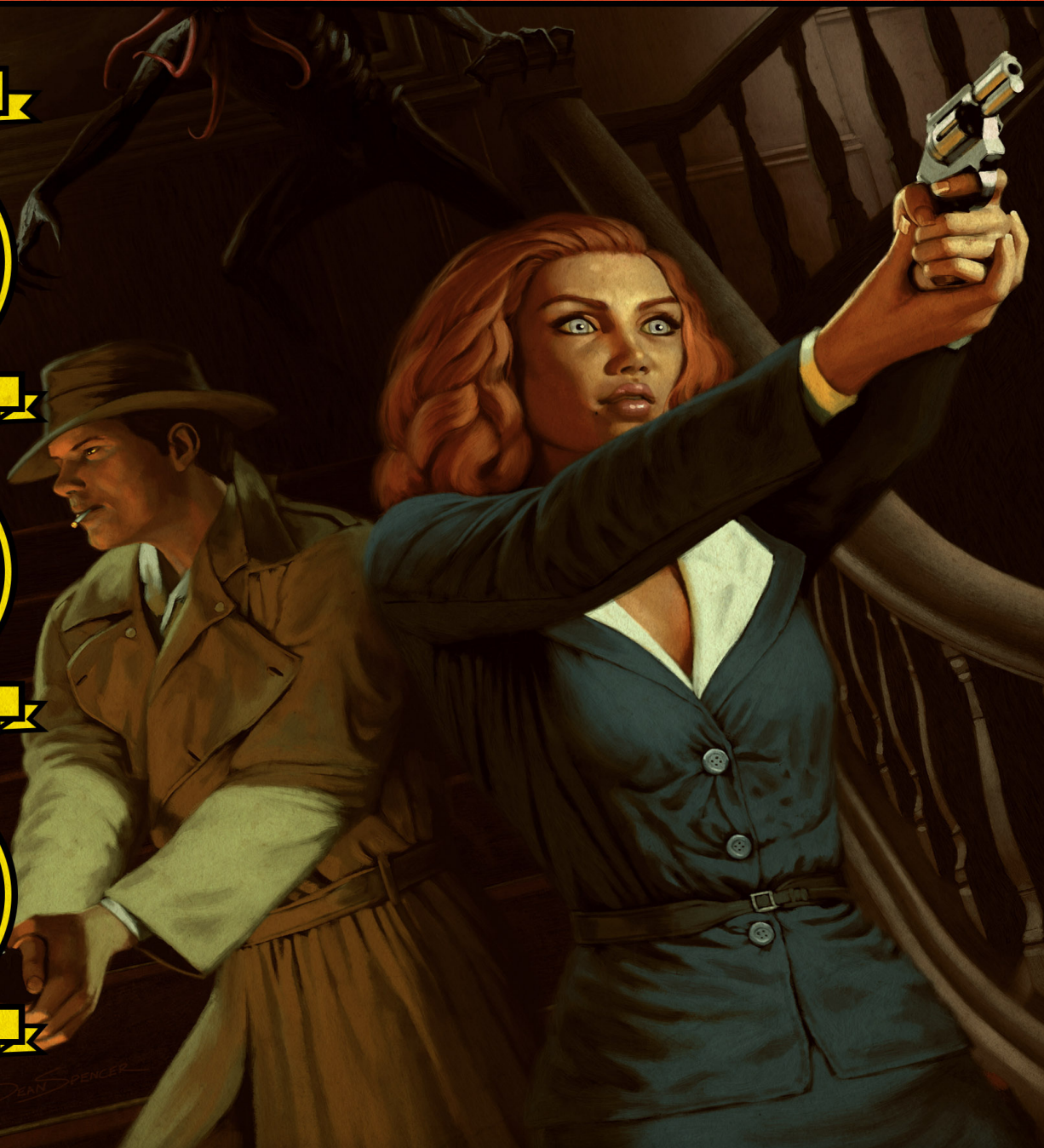
THE NIGHT HAG



THE MUMMY



THE VROCK



21 Spine-Tingling Tales of Terror

A 5e horror adventure anthology by DMDave

Why do we enjoy horror? Is it the existential mystery lurking behind death's door that draws us? Perhaps the terrors inflicted upon the protagonists remind us of our own mortality and relative safety? Maybe we enjoy the rush of adrenaline wrought by the cat suddenly springing out of a cupboard? Or is it something darker?

This document contains 21 tales of terror which can be easily inserted into any Fifth Edition adventure campaign. Most of the tales herein are little more than one or two scenes which you, the GM, will flesh out for your characters.

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Credits

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Special Thanks

The prompts for all of these awesome adventures were set up as a contest to help me get out of a fierce case of writer's block. I asked the patrons to go to Google, search for "retro horror art" and post the coolest image they found. This is the result. You can find the original images on our discord so you can see the inspiration behind each of these spine-tingling tales of terror.

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How to Use This Document

Each adventure prompt includes the adventure's basic details, a background, and an outline.

The adventure's **basics** include the suggested number of characters and levels for which the adventure was designed, a brief synopsis, and the adventure's setting.

The adventure's **background** details all of the events that led up to the start of the adventure. Most of this information is for a game master's eyes only; however, characters may uncover some of these details throughout the course of play.

The **outline** is divided into a minimum of three parts but may have as many as six or seven. It starts with the adventure's hook which leads to the story's encounters, however many there may be. It then ends with the aftermath/conclusion of the adventure. This last part covers unresolved plot points and lists any possible rewards gained by the party.

Treasure Rewards

Because of the fluid nature of many of these adventures, the adventures do not offer explicit gold and treasure rewards. If you are unsure how much treasure to grant the characters on successful completion of the adventure, assume they earn 500 gp per character per level. This reward can be given in the form of coins, art objects, jewelry, or even magic items. Review the Fifth Edition guidebook for game masters for the average costs of such items. The guidebook also contains treasure tables tied to the four tiers of play which may also guide the application of monetary rewards throughout the course of the adventure.

Running the Adventures

To run any of the adventures listed here, you need the three Fifth Edition core rulebooks. If you don't have a copy, you can access a free basic ruleset from the official source.

Text that appears in a box like this is meant to be read aloud or paraphrased for the players when their characters first arrive at a location or under specific circumstances, as described in the text.

When a creature's name appears in **bold** type, that's a visual cue pointing you to its stat block as a way of saying, "Hey, game master, make sure you get this creature's stat block ready—there's going to be an encounter!" If the stat block appears in the Appendix of this adventure, the text tells you so; otherwise, you can find the stat block in the core rulebook.

Spells and nonmagical equipment mentioned in the adventure are described in the core manual for players. *Magic items* are described in the core manual for game masters unless the adventure's text directs you to an item's description in the Appendix.

Skill Challenges

Skill challenges simulate an attempt to perform a task that takes longer and is usually harder than a single ability check. In its most basic form, the characters make a series of ability checks with the goal of earning a required number of successes before accumulating a maximum number of failed checks (similar to how death saving throws work).

Usually, the players decide which checks they want to contribute to the skill challenge. Typically, the characters may perform a given ability check only one time; if they attempt to repeat an ability check, they make the second check with disadvantage. The ability checks they make are lumped into two categories: primary and secondary. Both types of ability checks have their own DCs—more often than not, the secondary check DCs are 5 or higher than the primary check DCs. The skill challenges usually list the primary skills used for the challenge. All other skill checks contributed to the challenge are considered secondary. The characters are free to use any skill they like for secondary so long as they can give a good (and creative!) reason why it would help with the overall skill challenge. Any character can contribute a skill check to the challenge, and a character can make more than one check if they like.

So long as the characters achieve the required number of successes before achieving the number of failures for the challenge, the challenge is successful. The results for success and failure are detailed in the skill challenge's description.

Ethereal Plane

A few of the adventures in this document assume knowledge of the Ethereal Plane and how it functions. If you wish to run these adventures, it's recommended that you review DM Dave's Ethereal Plane campaign setting document first. You can get the document from [DM Dave's webstore](#).

Dark Themes

As the name suggest, the adventures contained in this anthology deal with a variety of dark topics. Be sure to speak with your players before you run any of these adventure to ensure that everybody knows what to expect and/or avoid. Naturally, you can remove any element of a story that you don't feel is appropriate for your table.



Deadly Choir

Suggested by Landon

Basics

Characters: 3-5 characters of 5th to 10th level

Synopsis: Strange incantations from beyond draw the characters to a hidden dimension where undead cultists sing praise to a stillborn godling

Setting: The Northern Omerian city of Desneorus, a logging town at the mouth of the Fairknot River where it meets the Omerian Ocean

Background

- A dangerous cult called the Order of Gryslogar hides within the Border Ethereal where it overlaps with an abandoned book shop. Undead abominations comprise the cult's ranks.
- Nightly, the undead cultists sing, invoking the ungiven name of a stillborn god. Their songs can be heard beyond the veil of the Ethereal in The Real.
- The cultists are actually singing to prevent the dead godling's return; if their incantations cease, the godling will rise from its eternal slumber and potentially destroy the city.

Outline

The story plays out as follows:

Set-up

Residents in a rundown part of the Desneorus complain to the town guards that they hear strange noises coming from an old bookshop in their neighborhood. Whenever the guards investigate, they find no-one inside the book shop. They hear the singing, but it seems distant and inaudible. The guards dismiss the strange sounds, claiming it to be nothing more than the wind blowing through the store's old rafters. Eventually, the citizens turn to the characters for help.

Investigating the Bookstore

The characters investigate the old bookshop. They, too, can hear the unusual singing within, but can't seem to find its source either. A character who succeeds on a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check recognizes that the singing comes from the Ethereal Plane. A character with proficiency in Arcana makes this check with advantage.

Into The Ethereal

Characters with truesight or *see invisibility* see six cloaked, skull-faced undead in the Border Ethereal performing what looks like a dark ritual at the center of the bookshop's main room. The fleshy remains of a giant child lie on the floor between them. If the characters hope to interact with the cultists, they will need to enter the Border Ethereal. They can do so via the *ethereality* spell, *oil of ethereality*, or another effect that allows them to enter the Border Ethereal. If need be, a close friend of the characters might coincidentally come into ownership of multiple vials of *oil of ethereality* which they are willing to sell the characters at a reduced price.

The Order of Gryslogar

Unless the characters intervene, the six **undead chanters** (see the Appendix) continue their dark ritual. A character who inspects the corpse at the center of the room and succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (Religion) check recognizes that the creature is a stillborn godling. A character who performs a DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check understands that the cultist's ritual targets the godling. However, unless the character succeeds on the check by 5 or more, the character does not understand that the ritual is meant to prevent the godling from returning to life.

Aftermath/Conclusion

If the characters recognize the cult's reasons for the ceremony and leave them be, the singing continues but the godling does not rise again from its slumber. Desneorus is safe.

If the characters interrupt the cultists' ceremony, the **necrembyo** (see the Appendix) immediately rises from its slumber and exits the Border Ethereal, entering The Real. Confused and angry, it attacks all living creatures in sight. The characters would be wise to evacuate the city at this point. Ω



The Eye and the Hand

Suggested by ifrank

Basics

Characters: 3-5 characters of 2nd to 4th level

Synopsis: Over the last month, seven mutilated corpses appeared in the Fairknot River, each one missing its left eye and left hand.

Setting: Nestled on the banks of the Fairknot River between Desneorus and Knotside, The Northern Omerian town of Barnemouth

Background

- A necromancer named Grazis Black recently discovered an underground temple believed to have once belonged to a dangerous interplanar lich of great renown.
- The temple contained a hidden chamber within which dozens of mummified left hands and left eyes were kept. All of the disembodied parts radiated strong necrotic magic.
- Grazis Black believed that one of the hands and one of the eyes belonged to the mad lich. However, he was not sure which two it was.
- Over the last month, Grazis has captured and mutilated commoners, applying the severed hand and eye to each one in the hopes that he will discover the correct pair through trial and error.
- So far, Grazis has been unsuccessful—and so his experiments continue. He dumps the body in the Fairknot River, removing their lower jaws so no one may cast *speaking with dead* on their corpses.
- What Grazis doesn't realize is that all of the hands and eyes are fake, and were planted by a malicious demonic entity hundreds of years before Grazis discovered the cavern.

Outline

The story should play out as follows:

Set-up

A close friend or wealthy patron of the characters asks them to discover who killed her daughter. Her daughter was discovered in the Fairknot River, her left eye, lower jaw, and left hand forcibly removed from her body. The girl appears to have died from blood loss and shock.

Investigation

The characters have a few ways to approach the adventure.

The Body. If they ask to see the body, the town's Priest of Tholona will let them observe the body for a healthy bribe. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Medicine) check (player's choice) reveals that there are flakes of red mold under the fingernails of the girl's intact right hand. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Nature) check lets the character know that the mold in question only grows

at a certain part of the river roughly 8 miles east of Barnemouth. Characters who travel to that area and succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check can find recent boot prints that lead north of the river.

Rumors. If the characters spend a day questioning people in Barnemouth, they soon learn that six more girls were found dead with the same mutilations. A character who succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana) check realizes that removing the lower jaw was probably done to prevent *speaking with dead* from being cast over the body.

Missing Person. Just this morning, another farmer claimed that his wife—a young woman of the same height, build, and age—has gone missing. The last place he saw her was their farmland, roughly 6 miles northwest of Barnemouth. If the characters spend an hour searching the farm grounds and succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) check, they find the area from which she was abducted. They can easily follow the trail back to the old citadel within which Grazis Black operates.

The Hidden Citadel

The ancient cyclopean citadel where Grazis Black discovered the hands and eyes is almost completely hidden by trees and dense foliage. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Survival) check (player's choice) uncovers an opening that leads into the citadel. Even if the characters don't find it, their presence draws the attention of four of Grazis Black's **thugs**.

Inside the Citadel

Once inside the Citadel, it won't take the characters long to find the chamber in which Grazis Black conducts his gruesome rituals. Along the way, they might encounter lesser undead servants of Grazis', such as **shadows**, **skeletons**, or **zombies**. His latest victim has already been tied to a black altar and had her left eye removed. Grazis Black will soon remove her left hand if the characters don't stop him. Grazis Black uses the **necromancer** stat block included in the Appendix.

Hands and Eyes

If the characters defeat Grazis Black, they discover the same strange collection of hands and eyes that he did. All of the hands and eyes emit strong auras of necromantic and transmutation magic. Of course, the auras are illusions thanks to the casting of *arcanist's aura*. If a character attempts to place any of the eyes into their socket or the hand onto an exposed wrist, the character must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the fake artifact casts *power word kill* on the target. On a successful saving throw, the target instead takes 36 (8d8) necrotic damage.

Aftermath

The citadel also contains Grazis' stash of wealth. See the section "Treasure Rewards" on page 3 for details on how much wealth this stash contains. The girl the characters save is alive but permanently disfigured unless the characters can restore her eye with the casting of a *regeneration* spell or similar magic. Ω

Soul Breaker

Suggested by Gala

Basics

Characters: 3-5 characters of 11th to 16th level, and at least one should be a human native to Omeria

Synopsis: The characters travel to The Island of Claws in Xenem Dynasty to rescue a long-lost companion from the clutches of a vampiric alchemist who has been drinking the positive energy inherent in humans

Setting: Xenem Dynasty, a large island in the Ocean of Warna ruled by vampires

Background

- Xiong Chen, a two-hundred-year-old vampire from Xenem, hoped to discover a way to cure the Xenem people of their vampiric curse.
- While reading through old elven texts, he came across a ritual called Soul Breaker. Supposedly, Soul Breaker allowed the elves to absorb the positive energy inherent in humans.
- Chen performed the ritual on one of his human slaves but quickly realized that Soul Breaker didn't cure his vampirism. Instead, the positive energy he drew from humans temporarily suspended the weaknesses tied to his undead condition. He could travel in sunlight without burning, pass through running water, and so forth.
- He also learned that Soul Breaker had two side effects. First, those whose positive energy he absorbed shrank to the size of mice. Second, as soon as the effects of the positive energy consumption wore off, Chen found himself thirsty for more—this addiction was far worse than his blood lust had ever been.

Outline

The story should play out as follows:

Set-up

After a series of adventures, the characters return to one of the human character's homelands. There, they learn that the character's childhood friend was captured by vampiric Xenemese slavers while sailing in the Ocean of Warna. The friend's parents beg the characters to save him from the clutches of the vampires.

Xenem Dynasty

The characters must travel to the Island of Claws to save their friend from the Xenemese noble. Doing so will be tricky. While non-vampires are allowed to travel into the Xenem Dynasty, very few do so without official permission from the Xenemese government. If the characters have ties to important Omerians or there is a mainland noble who owes them a favor, they may be able to purchase such a permit at the cost of 1,000 gp per character.

Finding Their Ally

The largest city on the Island of Claws is Quqing, the Garden of Night. Because so many members of Quqing's nobility are undead, the city is a veritable ghost town during the day but comes alive at night. If the characters spend the evening gathering information, they can learn the name of the Xenemese noble who purchased their friend with a successful DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check—the character may add +1 to the roll for every 100 gp they spend on bribes (maximum of +5). The name of their friend's slaveholder is Xiong Chen.

Xiong Chen's Canyon Palace

The characters discover Xiong Chen's strange palace amid the walls of a jagged canyon. The canyon's crest prevents sunlight from ever reaching the floor, the perfect place for an old vampire to hide. The canyon itself is filled with dangerous undead such as **wights**, **vampires**, and **mummies**.

Dinner with the Vampire

Unless the characters were particularly careful during their investigation, Xiong Chen already knows that they're coming.



The vampire greets them at his home and invites them to dinner. He tells them that he hopes to negotiate a deal with the characters for the return of their friend, frequently reminding them that Xenem Dynasty does not abide by the same anti-slave laws as the mainlanders. During dinner, Xiong Chen allows the characters to bid on their friends' release, quietly listening to the characters' offers, if any. Eventually, Xiong Chen agrees to an offer. He tells the characters that he will free their friend as soon as they have dessert.

Dessert is Served

One of Xiong Chen's undead servants enters with a covered cake stand and places it at the center of the table. Xiong Chen removes the cover, revealing the characters' friend reduced to 1/20th of his size. Gas then fills the room. The characters must all make DC 18 Constitution saving throws. On a failed saving throw, the character falls unconscious for 1 hour, until the character takes damage, or until another creature uses its action to slap or shake the sleeper awake. During this commotion, Xiong Chen and four of his **wight** servants attack the characters. Xiong Chen is a **vampire** that uses the modifications noted in the sidebar.

Xiong Chen Flees

As a vampire, Xiong Chen may turn to gaseous form then flee to the heart of his palace if he is losing the battle. Vile labyrinths, traps, and deadly servants guard the location of Xiong Chen's actual resting place. It's unlikely that the characters will find him unless they plan to spend a few days searching for the vampire.

Aftermath

Once Xiong Chen flees, the characters may collect their companion. Their friend reveals that there are others like him, all of whom Xiong Chen drained of their positive energy, causing them to shrink. They're kept in a laboratory

not too far from Xiong Chen's dining hall. Unfortunately for their reduced-size friend and the others, not even a *wish* spell will return the positive energy stolen from them. Their friend, the other victims, and any character who fell victim to Xiong Chen's Soul Breaker attack will remain 1/20th their size forever. Ω

Variant: Xiong Chen

Xiong Chen uses the statistics of a **vampire**, except with the following change:

Soul Breaker. When Xiong Chen makes a successful bite attack against a human that is willing, grappled, incapacitated, or restrained, instead of dealing damage he can attempt to drain the human's positive energy. The target must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the target loses its positive energy. The target is then reduced to 1/20th its normal size in all dimensions and its weight becomes no more than 1 or 2 pounds. The target's size becomes Tiny. Until the effect ends, the target's Strength score is reduced by 10 (to a minimum of 1). Any equipment that the target is wearing or carrying is not reduced in size along with it. Weapons sized appropriately for the target only deal 1 damage of its normal type on a hit. Also, if the target's new Strength modifier would reduce its bonus to hit and damage while using Tiny melee weapons below 0, the target instead has a +0 to hit and deals 1 damage on a hit. Tiny weapons that rely on the target's Dexterity score still deal only 1 damage on a hit but may add the target's Dexterity modifier as normal. Nothing can reverse this condition, not even a wish spell.

For 1 hour after Xiong Chen drains a human of its positive energy in this way, he loses his Vampire Weaknesses trait, and damage from radiant damage or holy water does not cause his regeneration trait to stop functioning.





Ritual of the Last Lich

Suggested by Deckclubace

Basics

Characters: 3-5 characters of 11th to 16th level

Synopsis: A tired old lich hopes to open a portal to the negative energy plane that will destroy the city of Naqqad

Setting: Naqqad, a city on Omeria's eastern coast and part of the Contested Lands

Backstory

- There are very few liches in Omeria. And what few there are all always feel an innate connection to the negative energy plane, a realm of perpetual darkness and atrophy not too distant from Casar, the world in which Omeria exists. Liches call this unavoidable connection The Dark Calling.
- Over the last five-hundred years of her existence, The Dark Calling drove one such lich, Noora el-Haider of Karinione, insane.
- Desperate to free her mind of the interminable beckoning of negative energy, Noora el-Haider hopes to open a permanent portal to the negative energy plane. She believes doing so will free her mind of The Dark Calling. Unfortunately, it might also destroy the city of Naqqad in the process.

Outline

The story should play out as follows:

Set-up

The characters are traveling through the city of Naqqad in the Contested Lands, when suddenly, an explosion at the center of the city draws their attention. Instantly, day turns to night. A vortex of dark clouds forms over one of the city's tallest towers. Flashes of black lightning burst from the clouds. Each time one of them hits a person, the characters watch in horror as the target's soul is torn from their body and dragged into the sky. If the characters don't stop this disturbance, all of Naqqad is doomed.

Shadow Swarm

Thousands of **shadows** pour down the streets attacking any humanoid on which they can get their claws. The shadows

move like a wave of darkness. Treat the shadow wave as a hazard. The streets 500 feet before the tower in which Noora el-Haider performs her vile ritual are difficult terrain. When a character enters this area for the first time or starts their turn in the area, they must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the character takes 21 (6d6) necrotic damage and their Strength score is reduced by 1d4. The character dies if this reduces their Strength to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a short or long rest. If a non-evil humanoid dies from this attack, their own shadow joins the wave of shadows. The characters can attack the shadow swarm with weapons and magic. The shadow swarm has AC 12 and all the same vulnerabilities, resistances, and immunities as a typical shadow. If a character deals 30 or more damage to the shadow swarm in a single turn, they do not have to make the saving throw to resist the shadow's attack at the start of their next turn.

The Tower

The tower in which Noora el-Haider performs her dark ritual stands 200 feet above Naqqad's streets. If the characters can't fly to the top of the tower, they must use the tremendous flight of steps within. During this harrowing climb, **vampire spawn** and **wights** attack the characters.

Noora el-Haider

The **lich** Noora el-Haider stands atop the tower. When the characters arrive, she is only moments away from permanently opening a portal to the negative energy plane. Two undead **storm giants** protect her; the giants' type is undead, and they are immune to necrotic and poison damage as well as the poisoned condition. Noora can fight the characters but must maintain concentration (as if concentrating on a spell) for 1 minute so she can finish the ritual. If her concentration is broken, the ritual fails.

Aftermath

If the characters stop Noora before she completes her ritual, the growing hole closes and everyone is saved. Noora's phylactery is nowhere near Naqqad, so destroying her only temporarily halts her machinations. If Noora is successful, a permanent portal to the negative energy plane appears over Naqqad's sky. The portal unleashes a titanic wave of necrotic energy; all creatures within 5 miles of the portal must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. A target takes 72 (16d8) necrotic damage on a failed saving throw or half as much damage on a successful one. A target that dies from this damage returns as a **zombie** in 1d4 hours. Henceforth, Naqqad becomes a true necropolis. Ω

Kindling

Suggested by Lydia

Basics

Characters: 3-5 characters of 1st or 2nd level

Synopsis: A group of Pressonian abjurers believes that they are the targets of a dreadful curse that causes them to die in a fire shortly after they are married

Setting: The Summer Land town of Westmonde, just south of Vaskil Valley

Backstory

- Twenty years ago, an Anorian man named Elkin Kindling married a Pressonian human woman named Iris Sallili. As a Pressonian of noble heritage, she was allowed to live in a small home with Elkin in the town of Westmonde.
- Iris' ex-lover, a young Pressonian abjurer named Spyro grew jealous of her marriage to Elkin. Three nights after the couple married, Spyro and a gang of six companions set fire to the lovers' house. It seemed both Elkin and Iris died in the fire.
- After that night, Spyro and his companions discovered they were cursed. Any time one of them married, three nights after the ceremony, their home caught on fire killing everyone inside. After two of Spyro's friends died this way, the rest fear to marry, believing that Elkin's ghost haunts them.
- Finally, Spyro met a woman he loved enough to risk the curse. Two days ago he married another Westmonde girl named Iraklis. Afraid Iraklis might perish, he hires the characters to protect him and his wife from whatever apparition killed his companions.
- Unbeknownst to Spyro, Iris survived the fire. The flames covered her face and body in burns and the loss of her husband drove her insane. Since the event, she's sworn vengeance against Spyro and his companions. She already killed the first two of his companions. Now she hopes to kill Spyro and his bride.

Outline

The story should play out as follows:

Set-up

The characters meet a Pressonian abjurer (**knight**) named Spyro who just got married two days ago. Spyro lies that he is the target of vengeful assassins connected to a raid that he and his allies performed a few years back. He claims that the assassins set house fires, hoping to hide evidence of their invasions. If the characters see through his deception, he tells them what he believes to be the truth: Spyro thinks that he

and his friends are targets of the ghost of an Anorian man who they killed five years ago. Desperate, he offers to pay the characters 250 gp each if they protect him and their bride.

The Third Night

Spyro and Iraklis, a **commoner**, live in a small cabin in the forest on the outskirts of Westmonde. Spyro doesn't tell Iraklis why the characters are there; he lies to her and says they're "old friends" who've come to celebrate their marriage. Once she goes to bed, he asks the characters to patrol the outside grounds of his home. The characters are free to approach the situation any way they like. Throughout the night, characters with the highest passive Wisdom (Perception) scores notice a strange figure wandering in the forest. The figure looks like an elven man with long, black hair, wearing all white. The man appears to be carrying kindling in his arms. Spyro asks the characters to track the ghost—or man—down and destroy it before it gets to him.

Burn, Spyro, Burn

The "elven man" is actually Iris dressed as the ghost of her late husband, Elkin. She uses *minor illusion* and other tricks to try to draw the characters away from the cabin. If all of the characters leave the cabin, she sets the cabin on fire in their absence. The characters return to find both Spyro and Iraklis tied to the railing of their bed amid the blaze, both of them unconscious.

Revelations

Iris appears and removes her Elkin costume, revealing her disfigured face. If the characters try to stop her, she shares the story of how Spyro and his friends killed her husband in a fire five years ago. Iris will fight the characters to ensure Spyro and his wife die in the flames; she is a **spy** who knows the *minor illusion* and *fire bolt* cantrips. She can also cast *burning hands* once per day. Charisma is her spellcasting ability for these spells (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks).

Aftermath

If the characters allow Iris to carry out her mission, she kills the couple and thanks the characters for turning a blind eye. Iris explains that as a Pressonian woman—especially one who married an Anorian—it would always be her word against his. She would never win. If the characters save Spyro and Iraklis and allow Iris to live, Spyro captures Iris and takes her to the dungeons of Presson's Enclave. Even with Iris' story and the characters' corroborating evidence, Spyro suffers no negative consequences for the murder of Elkin. To make matters worse, the Pressonians find Iris guilty of four counts of murder and two counts of attempted murder. A week later, she's sentenced to death, burned at the stake. She later returns as a **ghost**, haunting the characters at night and blaming them for her death. Ω

Web of the Spider Queen

Suggested by *TheIronGamer*

Basics

Characters: 3-5 characters of 5th through 10th level

Synopsis: The characters must discover the fate of a well-known adventurer

Setting: Sabalona Timberlands, a deciduous forest on the west side of Northern Omeria just north of the Basilisk's Spine Mountains

Background

- Following a series of clues left behind in the safe room of a wrecked airship, the adventurer Arrow Diamond departed for his home in Rivertown for the Sabalona Timberlands.
- Before he left, Diamond sent a letter to one of his colleagues—one of the characters or one of their allies—imploping them to come find him should he not send a follow-up letter in two weeks.
- Diamond discovered the wreckage of an ancient interplanar ship built in the shape of a spider preserved under one of the forest's peat bogs.
- Inside the ship, Diamond discovered an *iron flask*. He opened the flask and freed a foul demon calling herself the Spider Queen. The Spider Queen captured Diamond and cocooned him. She now feeds on his memories, learning all she can about Omeria and its people.
- The Spider Queen is actually a fiend from a distant plane of existence. Long ago, interplanar dark elves captured the Spider Queen and stored her in the iron flask. During their flight home through the Ethereal Plane, their ship crash landed on Omeria. All of the dark elves died. But the Spider Queen survived, preserved by her prison.
- Once The Spider Queen learns all she can about Omeria, she hopes to give birth to hundreds of spiderlings that will grow to be just as dangerous and evil as she is.

Outline

The story should play out as follows:

Set-up

It's been two weeks since Arrow Diamond sent the letter detailing his excursion to the Sabalona Timberlands. He has not been heard from since. The characters—potentially prompted by their ally—should journey to Sabalona to learn the nature of Diamond's disappearance.

Following Diamond's Trail

Diamond did not give a specific location. Therefore, the characters will need to find clues that lead to his current whereabouts. They may do this with a skill challenge. See the section "Skill Challenge" at the beginning of this document to learn how skill challenges work. This particular skill challenge requires 4 successes before 2 failures. The primary skills used are Charisma (Persuasion) to speak with locals, Wisdom (Survival) to find clues in the area, and Strength (Athletics) to get through some of the more troublesome parts of the Sabalona Timberland. The DC for each check is 15 or primary skills and 20 for secondary skills. If the characters achieve 2 failures, they must start their search anew the following day. When the characters achieve 4 successes, they discover the wreckage of the Spider Queen's interplanar ship. While the characters search through the forest, check for random encounters morning, afternoon, and night. Roll a d20; the characters have an encounter appropriate to the area on a result of 18-20.

The Spider Queen's Ship

All but a small bit of the ship lies buried under the mud and peat of the bog. The huge ship has only a handful of chambers, all of which are covered in sticky webs. **Giant spiders, phase spiders**, and other arachnid horrors haunt the interior. The Spider Queen herself is found in the ship's bridge, located at the ship's bow. Here she holds Arrow Diamond captive.

The Spider Queen Attacks!

The **Spider Queen** (see the Appendix) attacks the characters. She hopes to capture them as she has Arrow Diamond, so she may drain their thoughts. Violent and driven insane by years of imprisonment in the *iron flask*, she fights until destroyed. When she is destroyed, she dissolves into a pile of foul-smelling, green ooze.

Aftermath

If the characters defeat the Spider Queen, they learn that it's already too late for Arrow Diamond—she completely drained him of his memories. His Intelligence and Charisma scores are both 1 as if affected by the *feblemind* spell. If the characters fail to defeat the Spider Queen and she captures them, she feeds on their memories and adds to her knowledge of the demiplane. Once the characters are totally drained, she gives birth to her brood who feast on the incapacitated heroes' flesh. From there, she and her army of spiderlings enter Omeria hell-bent on conquering the weak mortals that live there. Ω



Abyssal Brawl

Suggested by TreeTirTyTree

Basics

- **Characters:** 3-5 characters of 3rd or 4th level
- **Synopsis:** The characters bear witness to a titanic brawl between two fiendish creatures
- **Setting:** The Wounded Pass, a tunnel that cuts through the Basilisk's Spine Mountains connecting Northern and Central Omeria

Background

- The Wounded Pass is a fifty-mile-long tunnel connecting the northern end of the Tribal Confederacy of Mighty Tadju with the goblin nation of Gar Wabrizz.
- The Tadjuuni and Garrish created the tunnel in hopes of improving trade between their respective nations.
- Unfortunately, dark things from The Low crawled up into the tunnels, rendering it virtually impossible to travel through.

Outline

The story should play out as follows:

Set-up

For whatever reason, the characters need to pass through the Basilisk's Spine Mountains. They don't have access to airships, nor do they have the time to go the long way around. Climbing over the mountains could take weeks, if not months. So they are left with no choice but to make the harrowing two-to-three-day journey through The Wounded Pass.

Random Encounters

Plenty of dangerous creatures lurk in The Wounded Pass. Three times per day in the morning, evening, and night roll a d20. The characters experience a random encounter on a result of 17-20. Use the appropriate random encounter tables for subterranean locations geared towards 1st- to 4th-level characters to determine what they encounter.

Abyssal Brawl

Just before the characters come to the end of their journey, they encounter two colossal creatures fighting in the middle of the path. One creature is a giant, fiendish ape. The fiendish ape uses the **giant ape** stat block except with the following changes:

- The ape's type is fiend (demon) and it is chaotic evil.
- The ape is resistant to cold, fire, and lightning damage, and immune to poison damage and the poisoned condition.
- The ape has darkvision out to 120 feet.
- It speaks Abyssal and has telepathy out to 120 feet.

The creature the ape battles is a similarly huge infernal snake. The infernal snake uses the same stat block as a **behir**, except with the following changes:

- The snake's type is fiend (devil) and it is lawful evil.
- The snake is resistant to cold as well as bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons.
- The snake is immune to fire and poison damage as well as the poisoned condition.
- The snake's breath weapon deals fire damage instead of lightning damage.
- It speaks Infernal and has telepathy out to 120 feet.

The two creatures are too busy fighting each other to notice the characters. The characters will recognize this with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check. If the characters attack the two creatures, they put aside their differences for a moment to address the interlopers. Otherwise, the characters can get past the two monsters without any trouble.

Aftermath

Eventually, one of the fiends wins the combat, driving the loser back to the tawdry depths of The Low. The fiends have no interest in the goings-on of Omeria's top-side; therefore, neither will venture into the light of Naeyer's Eye. But it will certainly make the characters wonder what other horrors lurk on Caesar's dark side. Ω

Lake Woman

Suggested by Charlemagne-Charlie

Basics

- **Characters:** 3-5 characters of 1st level
- **Synopsis:** A fishing community must make sacrifices to a dangerous fey creature lest they lose their livelihoods
- **Setting:** The village of Al-Sala in the state of Didili in the Tadju Confederacy

Background

- The village of Al-Sala is built near a small lake of the same name within the Forest of Faraj at the eastern edge of Didili, Tadju.
- For over one-hundred years, the Al-Salani people have survived on the fish provided by Lake Al-Sala. Not only do they eat the fish, but they sell the surplus. This has made them disproportionately wealthy compared to their neighbors.
- However, this bounty comes with a dark price: a dangerous fey creature lives at the center of the pond who the Al-Salani call the "Lake Woman." If the Al-Salani do not provide the Lake Woman with the sacrifice of a child drowned in her waters on the first day of spring, the pond produces no fish for the entire year.
- Each year, the child who will die is chosen through a random drawing. Suspiciously, the town's leader, Sasan Atlasi, has never had to sacrifice one of his fourteen children, and people are starting to take notice.

Outline

The story should play out as follows:

Set-up

The characters stop in the village of Al-Sala looking for work. Immediately, they notice that the children of Al-Sala all share the same dour mood. Some of the adults have the same look about them; however, there are more than a few who seem excited about the first day of spring the next day. There is a celebration scheduled, but it is a private affair for the Al-Salani people only.

Speaking with the Children

If one or more of the characters speaks with the children, most of them are tight-lipped about it. Their parents warned them all that if they told outsiders what's really happening in Al-Sala, that they too would be sacrificed to the Lake Woman. Eventually, one of the children breaks their silence—a thirteen-year-old girl named Kobra Atlasi. Kobra is the town leader's daughter. She knows her father cheats in the lottery and wants to put an end to the death of her friends.

The Ceremony

Unless the characters confront Al-Sala's parents beforehand, the ceremony takes place the next morning at sunrise. Kobra tampered with the lottery to ensure that her name was drawn. Despite her father's protests, the parents of Al-Sala pull Kobra into the lake with intent to drown her. If the characters don't get involved, Kobra will die. There are twelve parents involved in the drowning, all **commoners**.

The Lake Lady Emerges

If the characters stop the ceremony and save Kobra from drowning, the Lake Lady rises from the waters and attacks the characters for interfering with the ritual. The Lake Lady is a **sea hag**. She fights until she takes 30 damage or more, then retreats to her hidden lair at the bottom of the pond.

Aftermath

If the characters don't stop the ceremony and Kobra drowns, the fish return in the spring and the Al-Salani once more rejoice in their wealth. However, if the characters stop the ceremony and drive off the sea hag, Lake Al-Sala produces no fish for the rest of the year, just as the Lake Woman threatened. In a matter of months, the majority of the Al-Salani's livelihoods are ruined by the absence of fish. A year later, Al-Sala is little more than a ghost town. Ω



Time of Death

Suggested by *campingcarl*

Basics

- **Characters:** 3-5 characters of 5th to 10th level
- **Synopsis:** When a gravedigger buries the same man for ten days straight, he starts to suspect that the man might be undead
- **Setting:** A small town named Mochlos in Northern Vaskil Valley

Background

- Every night, a dwarven gravedigger named Motrek buries the bodies given to him by the priests at the Temple of Tuteus in Mochlos.
- Over the last ten days, Motrek has buried the exact same orange-skinned devilkin man every night. While the devilkin man certainly seems dead, the cause of his death seems to differ from night to night. One night, the body has a stab wound. The next night, it appears to have drowned. And so on.
- Motrek always places the new body into a fresh grave. But he now wonders if the devilkin man returns from the dead each night.
- The old priests do not know why the body is the same, nor do they care. In their bigoted minds, all devilkin look the same.
- Unbeknownst to Motrek, the man is actually an extraplanar traveler named Lord Reverence.
- Reverence is stuck in a never-ending time loop on another demiplane.
- Each time Reverence dies, his consciousness "reboots" into an earlier version of himself. Meanwhile, the dead body he "wore" in the alternate timeline somehow finds its way to the forest outside of Mochlos.

Outline

The story should play out as follows:

Set-up

Having heard of their earlier exploits, Motrek reaches out to the characters wondering if they can help him. He explains what he knows about the situation: ten nights burying the same man and how he fears that the man might be returning from the dead. He hopes the characters will be there to exhume one or more of the graves to learn if the man is, in fact, coming back to life every night. Motrek doesn't have a lot to offer the characters other than a few copper pieces and a riveting story.

Exhumation

That night, Motrek meets the characters at the graveyard. With their help, he digs up a few of the bodies. While they dig, a large white horse appears seemingly out of nowhere and runs through the graveyard, spooking Motrek. The horse

then vanishes into the trees. Any spells used to stop the horse or communicate with it fail—almost as if the horse was an illusion of some sort.

All ten graves contain the exact same corpse, but their wounds are different (as detailed in the background). To make things even more confusing, there is a new body waiting to be buried at the temple.

If the characters investigate the bodies and perform a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Medicine) check (players' choice), they discover something unusual. Each of the corpses holds a piece of a *spell scroll* in its left hand and each piece is different. A character proficient in Arcana can try to piece the scroll back together with a successful DC 25 Intelligence (Investigation) check. The character adds +1 to the check for every piece they have—if they exhume all ten corpses, they should have eleven pieces counting the most recent. Each time the characters fail to uncover the scroll's secret, they will have to wait for another body to appear the following night. After the fifteenth body appears, the characters automatically pass the check to understand its purpose.

The scroll is actually a *remove curse* scroll. Despite its tattered state, its magic still works.

Vampire Attack

Just as the characters realize that the corpses' body holds the remnants of a *remove curse* spell scroll, a gang of **vampire spawn** attack them—there are two for each character present. All of the vampire spawn bear brands on their chests depicting a ram's skull. During the fight, the vampire spawn hiss in Abyssal over and over again, "We must stop them from ending the curse!"

Remove Curse

If the characters cast the *remove curse* spell on any of the dead man's bodies, all of the corpses shimmer with brilliant white light. They then transform into globes of positive energy and fly towards each other, colliding in an explosion of light and wonder. If there are any vampire spawn left when this happens, they immediately burst into flames at the sight of it. They are all destroyed.

Finally, the bright light fades and a single man stands: the true Lord Reverence.

Aftermath

Lord Reverence thanks the characters for their service, explaining that a mighty demon prince trapped him in an endless cycle of death. Now that he is whole once more, he must return to his companions who are currently trapped in another dimension. Reverence then puts his fingers to his mouth and whistles. Again, from seemingly nowhere, the white horse reappears, but this time it stops. Reverence swiftly mounts it. Then, with a final wave, Reverence vanishes in a flash of light.

If the characters fail to stop Reverence's curse, the devilkin's cycle of death and rebirth continues for all eternity. Ever so often, the characters come upon another one of Reverence's corpses, each one still gripping a piece of a *spell scroll*. Ω

Hypnotic Pattern

Suggested by TJ - TheDMToolChest

Basics

- **Characters:** 3-5 characters of 5th to 10th level
- **Synopsis:** A plague sweeps Castlegrasp that turns people blind—in a most horrific way
- **Setting:** The city of Castlegrasp on the Weysevain Coast

Background

- Among the many horrors created by Loikiel the Archmuter during the Transmuter Wars, perhaps none were more heinous than the oculoids.
- Oculoids are large, sentient eyeball creatures capable of hypnosis.
- Their hypnosis is also how they reproduce; a creature with eyes incapacitated by the oculoids' hypnosis becomes infected with a disease called oculoid spawn.
- Twenty-four hours after the creature becomes infected, the creature's eyes enlarge, gain sentience and crawl out of the creature's eye sockets. This renders the creature blind.
- Recently, a rogue oculoid snuck into Castlegrasp. It hides within the city's Orchard Park. Over the last few weeks, it has been using its hypnotic powers to rapidly reproduce.

Outline

The story should play out as follows:

Set-up

The characters are invited by a friend to join her at one of Castlegrasp's taverns for drinks and a potential quest. Their friend explains that some of the tigers that roam Castlegrasp's streets have been turning up blind, their eyes gruesomely removed. The characters' friend suspects that it might be the work of a strange eyeball creature that she saw lurking near Orchard Park. She tried to catch the creature, but it stopped her with some sort of hypnotic pattern which placed her into a temporary stupor. By the time she snapped out of her trance, the thing was gone.

After the characters' friend finishes her story, she grabs her head and complains about a sudden intense headache. Then, right before the characters' eyes (no pun intended), both of their friend's eyeballs swell and push their way out of her skull. While she screams, clawing at her bleeding face, the two enucleated eyes sprout tendrils and quickly scuttle away.

Only a *regenerate* spell or similar magic will restore their friend's missing eyeballs.

Orchard Park

If the characters follow their friend's eyeballs, the eyeballs inevitably lead them to Orchard Park. The eyeballs then slip into a sewer grate at the park's center. If the characters

destroyed their friend's eyes or otherwise kept them from getting back to the park, they need to search the park for clues. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check (players' choice) leads them to a trail of slime residue that disappears into the same sewer grate.

Sewers

However the characters discover the sewer passage, they must traverse a labyrinth of sewer tunnels before they can discover the oculoid's lair. If they're following the eyeballs, no checks are required. Otherwise, they will need to make a skill challenge (see page 3) to find their way to the "mother" oculoid, requiring 4 successes before they achieve 2 failures. The primary skill checks for this challenge are Intelligence (Investigation), Wisdom (Perception), and Wisdom (Survival). The DC is 15 for primary skills and 20 for secondary. If the characters succeed on the skill challenge, they find the oculoid's lair. Otherwise, they must wait until the oculoid strikes again—fortunately (or unfortunately, as it were), it emerges to propagate once every 24 hours.

Lair of the Oculoid

The oculoid's lair is a large, cylindrical room with 60-foot-high ceilings. A sewer grate above illuminates the chamber. A character that succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check recognizes that they are directly below the Amazing Clock. Dozens of passersby loiter on the street above. The sound of thundering water makes it impossible for them to hear the characters.

The oculoid is not alone in its lair. Hundreds of its young float in the water and linger on the stone walkways. When the characters appear, the **oculoid** and six **swarms of oculoid** young attack (both their statistics are included in the Appendix).

The oculoid swarms have no concept of self-preservation. However, if the oculoid's hit points are reduced to 20 or fewer, it attempts to flee through the maze of sewers.

Aftermath

If the characters successfully defeat the oculoid or drive it off, the strange disease stops and the oculoid never returns. Unfortunately, over a dozen of Castlegrasp's citizens lost their eyes before the characters defeated it. Castlegraspian healers do what they can to comfort the blind, but Castlegrasp's ban on transmutation won't allow them to cast *regenerate* to restore the victims' blindness. Of course, the characters are free to break the law to help those in need—at their own risk, of course.

If the characters fail to defeat the oculoid and its spawn, two weeks after the characters witnessed their friend's eyes pop out of their skull, hundreds of full-grown oculoids emerge from the sewers and attack Castlegrasp's citizens. The plague rapidly spreads across the Weysevain Coast. Eventually, Dinzer troops from Odonburg arrive and quarantine the region, renaming it "The Land of the Blind."
Ω



Feast of the Blood Maiden

Suggested by Prior

Basics

Characters: 3-5 characters of 5th to 10th level

Synopsis: A vampire invites the characters to the castle where she lives—but not for the reasons one might expect

Setting: The town of Lacasa on the Weysevain Coast

Background

- A cult of wealthy Cabalese merchants obsessed with undeath worship a vampire who they call the Blood Maiden.
- The cult performs the same ritual the first day of the year every year, which raises her from hibernation. Then, the cultists feast in her honor and allow her to drink their blood.
- Unbeknownst to the cultists, the Blood Maiden loathes her undead existence and wishes to be put out of her misery.
- The last time the cultists revived her, she secretly sent a letter to the estate of an old lover.
- The letter read: "You must save me. Come to Chateau Stark in Lacasa on the eve of the new year. They will try to stop you." The letter contained no information other than that.

Outline

The story should play out as follows:

Set-up

While traveling along the Weysevain Coast, the characters meet an Arruquettan woman named Beila Elua. Recently, Beila received a mysterious letter addressed to her great-great-grandfather who's been dead for fifty years. The letter reads: "You must save me. Come to Chateau Stark in Lacasa on the eve of the new year. They will try to stop you." The letter came with a small token shaped like a black mask.

If the characters cast *legend lore* or use a similar effect, they witness a frowning woman covered in blood. She's surrounded by pale-faced men and women wearing dark clothing. They all appear to be undead.

Lacasa

Lacasa is a small fishing village that owes fealty to the nearby city-state of Cabal. Lacasa's Lord, Brad Stark, lives in a nearby castle surrounded by a trio of lakes that feed into marshland. This is the eponymous Chateau Stark. Most of Lacasa's inhabitants are preparing to celebrate the coming of the new year at sunset.

Chateau Stark

If the characters approach the castle in the daytime, Stark's servants claim that their lord is currently resting in preparation for festivities later that night. If the characters show the servant the black mask token, the servant immediately changes their story and allows the characters to enter the manse. The servants explain that the characters will need to "don their costumes" before the feast begins. If the characters play along, the servant leads them to a dressing room that contains a variety of unusual costumes, all of which make the wearer look like an undead creature such as a ghoul, vampire, or zombie.

If the characters don't think to trick their way into the Chateau, they can instead wait till night to break into the chateau. After sunset, the top three floors of the grand castle are vacant. The characters need only to spend a few minutes searching the property to discover a poorly hidden secret door—a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check to find it hiding behind a false bookshelf—that leads down to the castle's cellars.

The Feast

However the characters discover the dungeon, they arrive to find twelve nobles and six of their servants dressed as undead creatures. They dance and revel around a stone sarcophagus at the room's center. The cultists pour blood onto the sarcophagus' lid and chant prayers in some unknown language. A character who succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check (player's choice) recognizes that the chants are sheer nonsense. All of the nobles are too drunk to realize this.

The Blood Maiden Rises

Inevitably, the sarcophagus' lid slides aside and the Blood Maiden rises from her hibernation. She looks annoyed with the cultists as they begin to waterboard her with pitchers of blood. Some of the cultists slash their wrists, offering their blood as tribute.

As soon as she notices the characters, she demands "Silence!" from her followers.

She then turns to the characters and says, "You received my letter. Thank you. Save me from these fools."

At that moment, the drunk nobles recognize that the characters were not invited. All twelve **nobles** draw their swords and attack. Their intoxication makes them all suffer from the poisoned condition. Meanwhile, the ten servants (all **commoners**) cower against the far wall. As soon as one or more of the nobles is killed, the entire group surrenders, recognizing that they are out of their league.

Make It Stop

Once the characters handle the nobles, the Blood Maiden explains her situation, how she's tired of her undead existence and wishes for someone to end her curse. If the characters don't already know how to destroy a **vampire**, she instructs them on the best methods. She doesn't fight them as they put her corpse to rest. She only whispers "thank you" as she dissolves into nothing.

Aftermath

Lord Stark is among the nobles responsible for the new year's rituals. If he survived the brawl with the characters, he begs them to keep the whole affair quiet, fearful that it could ruin his status as a Lord of Cabal. He even offers to pay the characters an exorbitant amount of gold for their discretion. In fact, he might even go as far to offer land and titles.

If the characters refuse to stay silent, Stark loses his title, castle, and most of his wealth. Furious, he swears vengeance on the characters. After a year of planning, he discovers a vampire lord willing to turn him into its spawn. The characters suffer many sleepless nights as the newly undead Lord enacts his revenge. **Q**

Disintegration: Made Easy!

Suggested by *kryptichero32*

Basics

Characters: 3-5 characters of 5th to 10th level

Synopsis: An evil gnomish monk creates deadly weapons powered by *ruby blutvekzelnite*

Setting: The magically silent village of Hushridge in Aspaeth

Background

- Six years ago, a despicable gnomish artificer named Orner Wreros traveled to the nation of Aspaeth.
- He sought a valuable magic stone called *ruby blutvekzelnite*. *Ruby blutvekzelnite* harnesses the power of unfettered transmutation magic. It is illegal to possess throughout most of Omeria.
- Wreros discovered the stones in an abandoned mine in the foothills of Aspaeth's Mount Cashille.
- Highly radioactive, the gems made Wreros violently ill. As he traveled back east with his bounty, he collapsed in the desert.
- Silent, masked halfling monks from the village of Hushridge discovered Wreros dying in the desert. They took him back to their monastery, cured his sickness, and healed his wounds.
- After Wreros recovered, he decided to stay in Hushridge where he could work in private—and in silence. Because he joined the convent, he now wears the guise of a silent, masked halfling monk.
- Eventually, Wreros created a weapon that channeled the transformative power of the *ruby blutvekzelnite* into raw force energy. Any creature hit by the weapon disintegrated, leaving nothing more than a pile of fine, gray dust in its wake.
- But the weapon isn't perfect yet. Wreros continues his studies, testing each new iteration on the monks of Hushridge.
- Although the masked halfling monks never reveal their identities to each other, they have started to notice that their numbers are reduced.

Outline

The adventure should play out as follows:

Set-up

One of Hushridge's silent, masked halfling monks meets the characters. The monk only communicates via thieves' cant. If the characters do not have a rogue in the party, the monk should travel with a translator. The monk explains the situation to the party—recently, the monk noticed that more and more members of the convent have vanished. Because the monks of Hushridge have no identity of their own—nor gender, age, ethnicity, and so on—the monk is not sure who is missing. The monk asks the characters to travel to Hushridge and learn what they can about the disappearing monks.



Hushridge

The original monks of Hushridge built the village into the eastface of Mount Cashille. Before Wreros' arrival, the monks numbered close to fifty. Now, only twenty-six remain, all the rest reduced to ash by Wreros' weapon. A magical sphere of *silence*, as the spell, completely encompasses the village of Hushridge at all times. The sphere extends 500 feet in all directions from the center of town. This sphere forbids the casting of any spells with verbal components. Nothing short of a *wish* spell will remove the field of *silence*.

All of Hushridge's monks wear featureless wooden masks and thick robes that conceal their identities. With the exception of Wreros, they are all halflings.

The monks of Hushridge give the characters a place to stay in one of their dormitories.

Finding Clues

There are a few leads the characters can follow to help them find out who's behind the disappearing monks.

The Tallest Monk. All of Hushridge's halfling monks stand between 2 and a half to 3 feet tall. Wreros, a relatively tall gnome, stands nearly 4 feet tall. As such, he seems like a giant among the other monks. A character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 13 or better immediately notices the difference. If they follow Wreros, eventually they learn that he frequently dips into a tool shed at the northern end of the village.

Fine, Gray Ash. If the characters spend a day exploring the silent compound, inevitably they find multiple piles of gray dust. Failing to understand the dust's significance, the monks usually sweep up the piles and dispose of them. The dust is actually the remains of the monks who Wreros obliterated with his disintegration ray. A character who examines the dust and succeeds on a DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check immediately recognizes this horrible fact.

Transmutation Magic. Unfortunately, the characters can't cast the spell *detect magic* while within the area of Hushridge's silence. But if they're clever, they might think to temporarily exit the village, cast the spell, then return before its duration ends. If they do, they immediately sense an immense aura of transmutation magic radiating from a tool shed at the northern end of the village.

Confronting Wreros

If the characters follow the clues and find Wreros' tool shed, they find the gnome inside tinkering with his weapon. Wreros works without his mask over his face which should be proof enough that he's not like the other monks. Either way, Wreros quickly arms himself with his disintegration ray and fires at the characters, all the while silently screaming profanities at them. See **Orner Wreros'** stat block in the Appendix for details.

If Wreros' hit points are reduced to 30 or less, he grabs his mask and retreats. He rushes to the village's refectory, where he silently sits with the other monks and pretends to be one of them. Slouching, it's hard to identify him. However, if a character succeeds on a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check, they notice blood dripping from one of the wounds they caused the gnome. Wreros then surrenders.

Aftermath

If Wreros survives and the monks learn that he was the one responsible for the deaths in their village, they enact vengeance on the gnome. The monks strip Wreros of his clothing and possessions, then bury him up to his neck in the desert. Eventually, the desert's ever-present mutant scorpions and cackling vultures find Wreros' exposed head and make a feast of his eyes and fleshy bits.

If Wreros survives the encounter with the characters, eventually, he perfects the weapon and uses it to eradicate all of Hushridge's remaining monks. The diabolical artificer then travels to Malembia where he sells copies of his weapon to the highest bidders in Malembia's black market. Chaos ensues. Ω

Night Coach

Suggested by rayeliann

Basics

Characters: 3-5 characters of 3rd or 4th level

Synopsis: Anyone who takes a ride on the mystery night coach seems like a different person once they return

Setting: Greatwell in The Summer Land's south

Background

- Although the town of Greatwell has been destroyed twice in the last seventy-five years, it continues to prosper.
- Greatwell is so busy, in fact, that it has taxi coaches that work day and night transporting wealthy citizens around town
- Recently, a strange black coach with a cloaked driver started making rounds in Greatwell.
- The driver is actually a ghostly coachman who can transport his coach, its horses, and any of its passengers to the Border Ethereal at will.
- Once the ghostly coachman traps its passengers in the Border Ethereal, one of Greatwell's innumerable ghosts possesses the passenger, assuming their identity.
- The coachman then returns the passenger to the true Greatwell, where the ghost continues to play the part of its host.
- Dozens of Greatwellian citizens are now possessed by ghosts and their loved ones are starting to take notice.

Outline

The story should play out as follows:

Set-up

While in Greatwell, the characters are approached by a noble woman. During their conversation, the woman acts paranoid, as if she's being followed. She explains to the characters that she believes there is something wrong with her husband. Two nights ago, he returned home after work and didn't seem like himself. Since then, he hasn't slept, he eats very little, and at times, he doesn't even seem to breathe. When she tried to call his attention to these quirks, he dismissed her fears, explaining that he was just under a lot of stress at work. Soon, the woman noticed that other people in Greatwell shared the same peculiarities that her husband did. Not only that, but she felt like some of them were spying on her.

She hopes the characters will investigate her husband's strange behavior. She offers the characters a gold reward from her own investment accounts (see "Treasure Rewards" on page 3 for details).

Investigating the Husband

The characters' best lead is to investigate the woman's husband (possessed **noble**). They can meet him at the man's home or at his work. The man is just as his wife explained: strangely distant, cold, and somewhat "off." Even his smile seems forced. Casting *detect evil and good* or a paladin using its Divine Sense reveals the **ghost** inside him. Truesight and *see invisibility* also detect the ghost. As soon as the characters sense the ghost's presence, it attacks.

A Trip Around Town

If the character's fail to detect the ghost within the noble woman's husband, they may want to explore the town. Characters familiar with Greatwell don't notice anything too unusual about the town. Daily routines continue. However, characters with high Wisdom (Perception) scores notice that they, too, are being watched by strangers wherever they go.

The characters are free to accost any of the possessed townsfolk. Immune to the charmed and frightened conditions, none of the ghosts will reveal their reasons for possessing the citizens of Greatwell. Complicating matters further, there does not seem to be any pattern connecting the victims.

Late Night Abduction

At some point during the adventure, while the characters are moving around town, there is a scream in the night. If they rush to investigate, they discover the noble woman being abducted. If her husband is still possessed by its ghost, he is the one performing the abduction along with three possessed **thugs**. Otherwise, it's four thugs. The abductors try to load the woman onto a black coach driven by two black mares. The possessed thugs attempt to flee while the coach takes off down the street. It's possible for the characters to catch the black coach, but unlikely. Even if they can match the speed of its horses, it turns ethereal just as they're about to get their hands on it. If the characters haven't determined that ghosts are involved by this point, the disappearing coach might seem completely unusual.

That Isn't Her

Just as it seems all hope of solving the mystery is lost, a day later, the woman returns to her estate. Of course, it's her body, but not her mind. Not her spirit. She is now among the possessed.

Even if the characters know ghosts are involved, the woman invites them to her manor. When the characters arrive, they find her home full of possessed citizens—dozens of them. They all use the statistics of **thugs**, **nobles**, or **commoners** (your choice). The characters should recognize that they're grossly outnumbered. If the characters attempt to fight the possessed citizens, have the citizens fight the characters until they are knocked unconscious. The spirits don't wish to hurt anyone; but they also don't want the characters getting in their way. Once the characters wake, they discover themselves bound. Either way, the woman sits before them and explains the situation.

We Are Everywhere

For the last few months, the ghosts of Greatwell—those who died during the arcane explosion that obliterated the town six days ago—have been using the services of the Night Coach to possess Greatwell's current citizens. The ghosts feel that the city was theirs—is still theirs—and that all the people who live here now are intruders. She warns that there are thousands of ghosts all waiting for their turn to return. Already, they've infiltrated Greatwell's leadership and nobles. All of its wealthiest merchants are also possessed. Once they conquer the rich, they will turn to the middle class, and then the lower class. Inevitably, everyone in Greatwell will be theirs. And so Greatwell itself will be theirs once more.

She only tells the characters this story because she knows there is little they can do to stop her and her allies. To prove

her point, she grants the characters use of *gem of seeing*. If the characters accept and use it, they see Greatwell as it has become: thousands of ghosts stand quietly on the street, their formless bodies patiently waiting their turn for a vessel. At the center of the town, a swirl of green light churns through the sky. It's almost as if the Ethereal Plane itself is being torn apart under the weight of so many dead.

"We are everywhere," she warns.

Aftermath

The woman and the other possessed allow the characters to leave her home unharmed. She asks them to forget the ghosts

and to leave the town. There is nothing they can do to turn the tide. They might try, of course, but how much can a handful of adventurers do against an army of angry spirits?

Just as the characters step out of the woman's house, have them all make a Dexterity saving throw. Regardless of what they roll, they all "succeed" and move out of the way in time just before a black coach and its horses run them over. The coach's driver looks back briefly at the characters as it continues to ride down the street—his face a wicked skull with green light glowing in its eyes. Wicked laughter trails behind the coach as it fades from view, returning back to the Ethereal. Ω



Midnight Walk

Suggested by Azargeth {-}7

Basics

Characters: 3-5 characters of 1st or 2nd level

Synopsis: A stubborn ghost haunts the streets of Murktown

Setting: Murktown in the Kingdoms of man

Background

- Murktown is the trade capital of Northern Omeria. A city fueled by rampant capitalism and greed, it's not without its fair share of ghosts who feel they were wronged in life.
- One such ghost was a kind old man named Dimitris Kallotis.
- As Dimitris was walking his dog one night, six bandits jumped Dimitris, stole his coin purse, and left him for dead in the alley.
- Now, Dimitris continues to haunt the same street where he died.
- Dimitris refuses to believe he is dead. His denial is so strong that it acts like a vortex, pulling others into the world around him.

Outline

The adventure should play out as follows:

Set-up

The characters are in the city of Murktown and it's late at night. For whatever reason, they're waiting on someone or something to arrive. While they wait, one of the characters (preferably a character with a low Wisdom score) spots the unmistakable form of an old man's ghost. The ghost steps out of its home and starts walking down the street. Have the character make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a successful saving throw, the ghost vanishes and that's the end of the story. On a failed saving throw, the character suddenly finds themselves trapped in the Border Ethereal.

Unless the characters have a way to see into the Ethereal Plane, it seems like their friend suddenly disappeared. The character in the Ethereal Plane can see their friends, but they appear blurry and their words are inaudible.

Dimitri's Walk

Dimitri's ghost whistles loudly as he walks down the street. It's the only thing that seems clear to the character. If the character follows Dimitri, they discover that the Border Ethereal version of Murktown actually changes and distorts to Dimitri's will. Dimitri is always a hundred yards ahead, no matter how fast the character runs after him. Furthermore, Dimitri's ghost ignores all attempts to get his attention.

This continues for a few minutes until Dimitri reaches the mouth of the alley where he died. He turns into the alley and seemingly vanishes. If the character enters the alley to find Dimitri, they find his corpse lying face down in the gutter. The world grows dark around them until there's nothing left by the character and Dimitri's ghost.

As the character turns to leave, they instead come face-to-face with—

Have the character make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a successful saving throw, the character wakes up back in The Real. They're lying face up in the exact same spot where they vanished. They have no recollection of what happened after they entered the alley.

If the character fails their saving throw, they find themselves in the Real alley gripped by terror. The only thing that they remember after they entered the alley were a pair of gruesome, blood-shot eyes staring into their soul. The character is frightened for 1 minute and gains one form of short-term madness. The target can repeat its saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself with a success. Furthermore, their hair (if any) turns stark white. If the character failed their saving throw by 5 or more, the character ages 1d4 x 10 years. The aging effect can be reversed with a *greater restoration* spell, but only within 24 hours of it occurring.

Aftermath

Every night, Dimitri takes the same walk. Those who know about this "Midnight Walk" know to steer clear of him lest they find themselves trapped.

The characters might want to find a way to stop these haunting from happening. Many paranormal investigators have come to Murktown trying to put a stop to Dimitri's midnight walk and so far they have all failed. In the end, Murktown accepts that it's just another quirk of their city that they have to live with. Ω

Don't Go Into Cheri's Room

Suggested by Landon

Basics

Characters: 3-5 characters of 11th to 16th level, one of whom should be a high-level cleric or paladin

Synopsis: A dreadful demon possesses a young girl

Setting: The town of Bonga in Boscos, Odonburg

Background

- The Dinzers of Odonburg are mostly areligious, rejecting the idea that the greater powers of the universe are worthy of prayer and praise.
- While this philosophy helps them focus on their arcane and technological pursuits, it often leaves them vulnerable to attacks from extraplanar threats such as ghosts and fiends.
- Recently, a young Dinzer girl named Cheri became terribly ill.
- The disease made Cheri feverish, jaundiced, and, at times, aggressive and violent.
- While Odonburg has its fair share of healers, none of whom could remove what ailed Cheri.
- Cheri's condition worsened. It soon became apparent that there was something terrible inside Cheri—something much worse than a disease.
- Unbeknownst to Cheri's parents, a powerful demon named Pazuzu has taken control of the young girl.
- An ancient horror whose very name evokes fear on other worlds, Pazuzu only recently discovered the demiplane Casar and its people.
- Delighted by the lack of divine worship in Odonburg, Pazuzu uses Cheri to learn as much as he can in the hopes that he and his abyssal hordes can use Casar as a foothold for Pazuzu's extraplanar interests.

Outline

The story should play out as follows:

Set-up

Desperate for a solution to Cheri's rapidly deteriorating condition, her parents find a way to contact the characters. Having heard of their deeds and their affinity for divine magic, they hope that they can remove the entity inside her. If the characters agree, Cheri's parents pay the costs to have them transported to Bonga.

The Stain of Evil

When the characters come near Cheri's home, it's clear that something is amiss. Pazuzu's regional effects bleed into Casar from his realm, creating the following effects:

- The powerful stench of animal feces pervades the area within 100 feet of Cheri. Her parents wear hankkerchiefs over their faces to combat the smell.

- Wild beasts within 500 feet of the home become increasingly neurotic and lustful, mirroring the behavior that occurs during their mating season.

Good-aligned paladins immediately feel the presence of strong evil, even without casting *detect evil and good* or using their Diving Sense feature. Warlocks, especially those whose patrons are fiends, experience disturbing familiarity. Classes with a connection to nature, such as druids and rangers, recognize that there is something unnatural about the home which they are about to enter.

Cheri's Room

When the characters arrive, Cheri's parents don't waste time before showing them to Cheri's room. Before they open the door, they brace themselves and suggest the characters do the same. When the door opens, a strong wind forces its way out of the room. The wind extinguishes natural flames such as those created by torches, candles, or uncovered lanterns.

All of the furniture in Cheri's room is shattered. Her clothes, bed sheets, and curtains are torn. Smearred human waste covers the walls, ceilings, and floors.

Cheri herself stands on the ceiling. Shadows cling to her, making her small form almost a perfect silhouette, except for her eyes which glow like beacons.

"Hello," she croaks in an unnatural voice. "Are you here to take my toy away?"

Pazuzu

Pazuzu is a powerful demon who specializes in possession. *Protection from evil and good, forbiddance, magic circle,* and other spells that would normally force a possessing agent out do not work on Pazuzu unless they are cast at 9th level.

A character who spends 1 minute examining Cheri can make an Intelligence (Religion) check. Use the table below to determine what the character learns. The knowledge learned is cumulative.

Pazuzu Knowledge

Check

Result Knowledge Learned

14 or less	The character does not know what's happening to Cheri other than that she is possessed by an evil entity.
15-19	Cheri is possessed by a fiend from a distant realm called The Endless.
20-24	The fiend is a demon prince named Pazuzu. Pazuzu is The Gatekeeper of the Endless. His realm, Pazraelia, serves as the doorway to the deeper layers of The Endless. It's possible his presence in Omeria forebodes the coming of more demons like him.
25+	

If a character receives a result of 15 or better on the check, they recognize that they will need to perform a special ritual called an exorcism to rid Cheri of the demon. Otherwise, the only way to stop Pazuzu is to kill Cheri.

Cheri's Exorcism

Performing the exorcism requires a skill challenge (see "Skill Challenges" on page 3 for details) and takes a minimum of 8 hours to perform plus an additional hour for each failed check. The exorcism requires 8 successes before 4 failures.

For each of the following spells the characters prepare or items the characters have in their possession, reduce the number of required successes by one:

- Prepare the spell *banishment*
- Prepare the spell *detect evil and good*
- Prepare the spell *dispel evil and good*
- Possess a holy symbol
- Possess a flask of holy water or powdered silver

The primary skills used are Strength (Athletics) to restrain Cheri, Intelligence (Religion) to understand the beast with whom they are dealing, and Wisdom (Insight) to see through Pazuzu's incredible lies. The DC is 18 for primary skills and 23 for secondary skills. Give the player's a +1 or +2 bonus to their checks for excellent roleplaying—especially if they really ham it up.

If the characters succeed on the skill challenge, they rid Cheri of Pazuzu and Pazuzu's consciousness returns to The Endless. Otherwise, the characters must restart the entire process anew the next day. If the characters make two attempts to rid Cheri of Pazuzu and fail both times, Cheri dies, the strain of Pazuzu's presence and the exorcism too great.

Each time the characters succeed on a check, Pazuzu (as Cheri) lashes out, using one or more of the following scare tactics:

Acidic Vomit. A 15-foot-long, 5-foot-wide spray of green vomit shoots out of Cheri's mouth. Each creature in the area must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) acid damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Fiendish Possession. One of Pazuzu's fiendish servants attempts to possess one of the characters, whichever one Pazuzu believes to have the weakest will (aka a low Charisma score). The target must make a DC 11 Charisma

saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the target becomes possessed. While possessed, the target is incapacitated and loses control of its body. The demon (a **vrock**) now controls the body but doesn't deprive the target of awareness. The demon can't be targeted by any attack, spell, or other effect, except ones that affect fiends. The target's alignment becomes chaotic evil, its Intelligence and Charisma scores become 8, and its Wisdom score becomes 13. It otherwise uses the possessed target's statistics, but doesn't gain access to the target's knowledge, class features, or proficiencies.

The possession lasts until the body drops to 0 hit points, the vrock ends it as a bonus action, or the vrock is turned or forced out by an effect like the *dispel evil and good* spell. When the possession ends, the vrock returns to the Endless. The target is immune to the vrock's possession for 24 hours after succeeding on the saving throw or after the possession ends.

Flames. The walls of Cheri's room erupt in flames. A creature that starts its turn in the room must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) fire damage on a failed saving throw or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature can use its action to extinguish the flames.

Frightful Presence. Through Cheri, Pazuzu shouts obscenities in Abyssal. Any creature within 30 feet of Pazuzu that hears it must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. The target can repeat its saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself with a success. A target that succeeds on its saving throw or the effect ends for it is immune to this effect for 24 hours.

Haunting. Pazuzu manifests illusions of one the character's dead loved ones. The illusion begs the character to stop, claiming that they're being tortured by Pazuzu in The Endless. The target must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or become charmed by Pazuzu for 1 minute. While charmed in this way, it treats Pazuzu (through Cheri) as an ally to be protected. The charmed condition ends early if the target takes damage. A target that succeeds on its saving throw or the effect ends for it is immune to this effect for 24 hours.

Telekinetic Slam. Pazuzu targets a weak-looking character with a telekinetic slam. The target must make a DC 18 Strength saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the target is hurled into the nearest wall, taking 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage from the attack.

Pazuzu's Claws. Claw marks appear on Cheri's face, arms, and chest. In her true voice, Cheri screams, "Please! Help me!"

Unholy Strength. Cheri herself attacks the characters. While under the influence of Pazuzu, treat her as having the statistics of a **giant ape**, except her size is Small and her type is fiend.

Aftermath

If the characters rid Cheri of Pazuzu, Cheri spends the next few days recovering from the trauma. She remembers very little of Pazuzu's time in her body, but remembers feeling like she was at the bottom of a deep, dark well from which she could not escape. Cheri's parents start to come around to the idea that faith in the divine might not be as silly as it seems.

If Cheri dies, Pazuzu returns to his realm. Just before he departs, he whispers, "See you soon." Ω



The Rider

Suggested by Vracken

Basics

Characters: 3-5 characters of 5th to 10th level

Synopsis: A headless rider terrorizes travelers

Setting: The Leash, a road that runs the length of the Weysevain Coast

Background

- From Castlegrasp to Cabal, The Leash is a 375-mile-long road that connects all of the major cities of the Weysevain Coast.
- Travelers on The Leash owe their safety to a clan of specially-trained fighters known as Ghosts.
- Ghosts ride on lumibikes, two-wheeled motor vehicles powered by *emerald odonburgite*.
- These highly trained warriors ensure that The Leash stays free of the dangers that lurk in the neighboring Obsidian Plain and Desolation of Ditimaya.
- Twenty years ago, there was a Ghost named “The Rhambi” Mhambi who travelers on The Leash feared for his extreme measures.
- Mhambi beheaded anyone he suspected of banditry. He would then drag their headless corpses behind his lumibike.
- Eventually, Mhambi targeted a group of innocent travelers traveling from Castlegrasp to Orbea.
- Mhambi refused to repent for his misdeed, claiming that on The Leash, his word was law, evidence be damned.
- Eventually, Mhambi’s fellow Ghosts trapped and fought the rogue rider. Then, in an ironic twist of fate, they beheaded Mhambi.
- Twenty years later, rumors persist that “The Rider” Mhambi is now a true ghost—and that he and his headless undead bandit army haunt The Leash.

Outline

The story should play out as follows:

Set-up

The characters are traveling along The Leash at night. Suddenly, one of the characters spots someone running towards them in the dark. After the character has a moment to adjust their eyes, the character realizes that the person running at them is missing his head, their neck a bloody, jagged mess. Despite the lack of a head, the person continues to run down The Leash.

If one headless person wasn’t strange enough, three more headless runners appear a few seconds later. Like the first headless person, they run down the road as if there is someone or something hot on their heels.

Then, after those three pass, another five headless bandits appear, all running. The **headless bandits’** stat blocks are included in the Appendix. They have no interest in fighting the characters, even if they’re attacked. They only want to get away from *him*.

Mhambi

From the edge of darkness comes the sound of a lumibike’s engine revving. Twin green lights turn on, casting bright light in a 60-foot cone. Those caught in the beam can’t make out the driver. But anyone with darkvision sees right away that the bike’s rider is a headless man wearing blood-stained, white leather armor. It’s “The Rider” Mhambi!

At first, Mhambi chases after the headless bandits. However, once the headless rider senses the characters on the side of the road, he pivots his spectral lumibike and chases after them. If they’re on The Leash this late at night, surely they must be bandits. See the Appendix for **The Rider’s** stats.

Mhambi fights until destroyed.

Aftermath

Of course, Mhambi cannot be truly destroyed. Dropping him to 0 causes him to disincorporate. Then, one month later, he returns to The Leash, ready to behead any bandit he comes across. Of course, when you lack a head, everyone seems like a bandit, don’t they? Ω



The Worm That Burns

Suggested by *ArmoredOcean*

Basics

Characters: 3-5 characters of 5th to 10th level—it works particularly well if the characters do not have access to abilities that can see through illusions or magical polymorph

Synopsis: A seemingly innocent woman is set to be burned at the stake

Setting: The village of Shadowfen in Steel Church

Background

- The Witnesses of the Worm, a group of fanatics from Steel Church, believe that Omeria's end will be ushered in by a great extraplanar aberration called the Un-Worm.
- Often seen as somewhat unhinged and overly paranoid, the Witnesses frequently accuse innocent people of "collusion with the Un-Worm."
- The Witnesses hold considerable sway over the leaders of Steel Church. This allows them to operate with almost total immunity.
- Recently, the Witnesses accused a villager of colluding with servants of the Un-Worm.
- The Witnesses have already spent hours interrogating the woman. She continues to deny her involvement.
- Unless someone intervenes, the Witnesses will burn the woman at the stake.
- Perhaps coincidentally, the Witnesses are correct in their assertion: the woman is, in fact, colluding with the Worm. To top it all off, she is actually a horrible shapechanging aberration called a **woxect**.
- The **woxect** hopes to use the event to discredit the Witnesses of the Worm and end their campaign against the servants of the Un-Worm.

Outline

The story should play out as follows:

Set-up

While the characters are traveling in or near the village of Shadowfen in Steel Church, they are approached by a distraught farmer. With tears in his eyes, the farmer explains that his wife was taken prisoner by a group of cultists. He does not know the name of the cultists, only that they bear insignias with a purple eye. The man offers the characters 3 sp—all of his savings—to help save his wife.

The man is actually a **woxect** (see the Appendix) in disguise. He perfectly plays the part of a grieving husband. He and his "wife" even have a small piece of rundown farmland they claim to own. If the characters ask other people of Shadowfen about the man and his wife, they claim not to know who they are, commenting that the couple "recently moved here from another part of Steel Church."

The Witnesses of the Worm

It won't take long for the characters to learn who the cultists with the purple eye are: the Witnesses of the Worm. Most Steel Churchians view the Witnesses as a group of insane fanatics. Their leader, Essence of Curiosity, has strong connections within Steel Church's government.

With a few bribes and a successful DC 13 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) check (players' choice), the characters learn that the woman is being held in a nearby outpost owned by the Witnesses.

Witnesses Outpost

The outpost in question is rather well-guarded by dozens of **cultists**, **cult fanatics**, and hired **thugs**. Driven by their own sense of self-righteousness, the Witnesses do little to downplay their fanaticism.

While the characters could conceivably fight their way through the mob, their best bet is to use disguises or clever ruses to find their way inside. They keep the woman in a covered earthen pit at the center of the outpost's courtyard. She seems tired and dehydrated. Lash marks on her arms and legs hint at the Witnesses' cruel interrogation techniques. She pleads with the characters to save her, claiming she has told them everything that they want to hear and they still won't let her go.

If the cultists catch the characters trying to save the woman, their forces surround them. The Witnesses' leader, a devilkin woman named Essence of Curiosity, tries diplomacy with the characters. She recognizes that the woman may seem innocent to the "uninitiated" but she implores the characters to trust her. While Essence seems more sincere than her colleagues, she still has an unhinged look in her eyes that often makes it seem like she's lying (even when she's not).

Burned at the Stake

If the characters can't or won't save the woman from her prison, the Witnesses plan to burn her at the stake later the same evening the characters arrive. The event takes place at the center of the courtyard. The cultists bind the woman to a tall post surrounded by logs and kindling. She screams for someone to stop them from executing her right up to the moment Essence tosses a torch onto the dry hay encircling the logs.

As the woman burns, she screams and begs, trying to sell any non-Witnesses at the event that she is a human. If the characters are there and let her burn, she finally gives up the ruse and assumes her true form. The slime that covers the **woxect** (see the Appendix) allows her to easily escape from her binds. She transforms into her true form and attacks, slaughtering any of the Witnesses that come within reach. Two more **woxects** arrive and join the fray. To ensure their plot is a success, they plan to kill all witnesses (cultists and characters alike).

Aftermath

If the characters save the woman and label the Witnesses as fanatics, she begs them to let the rest of the world know of the Witnesses' evil. She hopes the characters' account will discredit the Witnesses in Steel Church and beyond. If the characters do as she asks, inevitably, the Witnesses assume

that the characters are also servants of the Un-Worm. Therefore, the characters must be destroyed!

On the other hand, if the woman's plot fails and she reveals herself, the characters will understand the Witnesses' cause. The last thing the woxects want are more obstacles in the way of their quest to destroy Omeria. Therefore, the characters must be destroyed! Ω



Cauldron of Evil 3: Exogrim's Revenge

Suggested by Armitage Gibson

Basics

Characters: 3-5 characters of 11th to 16th level

Synopsis: A vile villain returns, ready to enact revenge on the characters—the only trouble is that the characters have no memory of the villain

Setting: Anywhere in the Desolation of Ditimaya

Background

- Following his near-destruction at the hands of his arch-nemesis, the archlich Exogrim has returned!
- Exogrim scoured all of Omeria in search of his adversary as all-consuming dreams of revenge clouded his thoughts.
- Finally, he discovered his enemy and his entourage within the arid wasteland, the Desolation of Ditimaya.
- ... the only trouble is, it's not actually his enemy. Exogrim has been gone for so long, his nemesis died decades ago. The person who Exogrim thinks is his enemy—one of the characters—just happens to look very similar.
- No matter—Exogrim will have his revenge!
- And this time, Exogrim rides on the back of a great, two-headed undead dragon whose breath can turn humanoids into zombies.

Outline

The adventure should play out as follows:

Set-up

The characters are somewhere outside in the Desolation of Ditimaya, a continent-spanning desert at the center of Omeria. Perhaps they've just finished another adventure, or they could be meeting an ally. Regardless, the character with the highest passive Wisdom (Perception) score spots something unusual in the sky. At first, the character thinks it's a strange bird. But as the creature flies closer, it becomes apparent that it's some sort of two-headed undead dragon beast—and there's someone riding on its back! Just as soon as the characters realize they're about to be attacked, the dragon's rider raises a skull-topped staff above his head and cries, "Finally! Vengeance is mine!"

The Battle

Exogrim (a **lich**) rides on the back of a **necrowing** (see the Appendix). Despite being a formidable combatant—assume he already has all of his defensive spells up—Exogrim is also a sucker for pageantry. Choose a character. Exogrim believes that character is his arch-nemesis. All during combat, he crows at the character, challenging them directly and blaming them for his near destruction.

"You will pay for what you did, Valastar!"

"Vengeance shall be mine, Valastar—today you draw your last breath!"

"Do you hear that, Valastar? That is the sound of inevitability. That is the sound of your doom!"

A Case of Mistaken Identity

At some point during the battle, one or more of the characters should realize that Exogrim has mistaken the targeted character for someone else. If the characters confront Exogrim with this information, Exogrim withdraws for a moment and ponders. Finally, he asks, "Wait. What year is it?"

So long as your campaign is set in Omeria's modern age, the year is 1050 AT. As soon as Exogrim learns this, the lich turns a bright shade of red. Not literally, of course. Exogrim lacks cheeks.

"Oh, fiddlesticks," Exogrim curses, recognizing his error. "That means I've been gone for nearly five hundred years. Ouch. But I guess that explains why there's now a desert here."

Aftermath

Exogrim takes a moment to gather himself and apologize for his mistake. His disappointment is obvious. He then shrugs and asks the character if they're interested in having a new arch-nemesis. Exogrim spent the first centuries of the Age of Triumphs toiling and researching the secrets of the cosmos. Eventually, he got bored with it. Then, one day, a heroic barbarian named Valastar raided Exogrim's tower and picked a fight with lich. For the first time in ages, Exogrim felt a purpose again. Now, with Valastar dead and gone, Exogrim fears he will once more lose his purpose.

If the characters reject Exogrim's offer, he promises that he will make it worth their while. In fact, he already has three world-ending schemes that he was stewing on the flight over. He's not above begging, either.

But if the characters agree, he excitedly takes off on his necrowing (assuming it didn't get destroyed in the fight) and shouts down to the heroes, "You won't be sorry, heroes! Er... I mean, you *will* be sorry. Whatever. You know what I mean!"

Exogrim will return in *Cauldron of Evil 4: New Blood*. Ω

The Screaming Temple

Suggested by AK Cloaked Gamer

Basics

Characters: 3-5 characters of 17th to 20th level who just had a close ally—or possibly another character in their party—die tragically

Synopsis: The characters must travel across the cosmos to rescue a dead friend's soul

Setting: Aqen, an undead-filled layer of The Endless.

Background

Most souls that leave Omeria become part of the Ethereal Plane's protomatter.

Sometimes, those souls slip through Ethereal gaps which jaunt them to the deep, dark realms of the cosmos.

One of these realms, The Endless, is a distant plane of infinite chaos and evil.

Infinite layers comprise The Endless, each ruled by foul demonic entities, most of whom loathe life.

One of the Endless' most dangerous layers is Aqen, often referred to as the Land of the Dead.

Outline

The story should play out as follows:

Set-up

A close friend of the characters' dies. It might even be a player character who met their untimely fate. High-level spells such as *raise dead* and *resurrection* don't seem to work. After consulting with a local sage, the characters suspect that their ally's spirit might no longer be within the Ethereal Plane. The sage performs a powerful divination ritual—one that nearly kills her—and discovers that their friend slipped into The Narrow Path, a legendary Ether Gap. The Narrow Path shot their ally's soul across the cosmos, and now their soul is lost in Aqen, the Land of the Dead.

The Warning

Before the characters decide to take the journey to Aqen, the sage warns them of the dangers involved. She requests that they spend at least a month or longer performing research on the plane.

If the characters agree, they must spend a minimum of five days performing research. At the end of the five-day period, one of the characters must make an Intelligence (Investigation or Religion) check (player's choice). The character adds +1 to the check for every five days beyond the first five they spend performing research. Use the table below to determine what the character learns. Each result corresponds to one or more sections of this adventure's outline. The results are cumulative, too. For example, if a character gets a 25 on their check, they learn about The Narrow Path and Aqen. Feel free to share not only information around each hazard and obstacle the characters will face, but the actual saving throws needed to get past the hazards. Their lives may depend on it.

Aqen Research Results

Check Result Dangers Learned

0-17	The characters learn nothing useful
18-22	The Narrow Path
23-25	Aqen
26-27	The Bargainer
28-29	The Forest of Sorrow
30-31	The Screaming Temple
32+	No One Leaves Aqen

In addition to this knowledge, the sage explains that the plane may allow the characters to enter it, but it definitely won't let them leave. The only way the characters will be allowed to escape is with the help of a divine power. If there isn't a cleric in the party with access to Divine Intervention, the characters may need to quest to secure the help of a deity or other powerful patron. In Omeria, only the *danaavrakti* possess conjuration powers strong enough to pull creatures from Aqen; and they don't do anything without attaching a high price.

Into the Ethereal Plane

Following the same path their disembodied friend followed, the characters travel into the Deep Ethereal. They can do so by using a *plane shift* or *gate* spell, which allows them to permanently enter the Ethereal Plane.

Once within the Ethereal Plane, the character may will themselves to The Narrow Path with a successful DC 15 group Wisdom check. If the check fails, they become lost within the Ethereal Plane for 1d100 days. Once they find their way back, they may try again.

The Narrow Path

The Narrow Path is a planet-sized maelstrom so powerful that it shreds thoughts. Its colossal accretion disks stretch out like the arms of the squid. To even view it is to accept its pull. There is no escape. Every character needs to make six saving throws in the following order.

- A DC 15 Strength saving throw to protect themselves from being pulled apart by The Narrow Path's violent currents.
- A DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to avoid large bits of protomatter sliding towards the gap's event horizon.
- A DC 15 Constitution saving throw to maintain concentration during the descent.
- A DC 15 Intelligence saving throw to recall the sage's directions during the descent.
- A DC 15 Wisdom saving throw to prevent oneself from going mad during the descent.
- A DC 15 Charisma saving throw to avoid total disincorporation.

The fate of each character depends on how many successful saving throws they achieve, as shown on the table below.

The Narrow Path Saving Throws Successes Outcome

0	The Narrow Path completely eradicates the character. Not even The Great Creator can return them to life.
1-2	The character takes 45 (10d8) force damage, 45 (10d8) necrotic damage, and 45 (10d8) psychic damage. If this drops the character's hit points to 0, they are completely eradicated (see above). Even if they survive, they are forever changed by the event. They gain one form of indefinite madness which can never be cured.
3-4	Same as above, except the character takes half as much damage and does not gain a form of indefinite madness if they survive.
5-6	The character survives the trip through The Narrow Path unscathed.

Aqen

Once through The Narrow Path, the characters arrive in Aqen, the realm of the undead. Aqen is a frozen, gray wasteland devoid of all life. There is no sun. Just impenetrable darkness masked by perpetually rumbling storm clouds. A fat, rust-colored moon crawls through the sky, its phases constantly changing.

The entire land exudes constant necrotic energy. When a living creature starts its turn in Aqen, it takes 1 necrotic damage. If this damage reduces a target to 0 hit points, it dies and returns as a **zombie** in 1d4 hours. Casting *death ward* on a creature protects it from this effect.

The Bargainer

After the characters have a chance to recover from their trip, a strange figure appears. The figure is shaped like a man but its proportions are distorted and unnatural. It lacks a face. The creature is a **visage** (see the Appendix) and it has come to bargain.

The visage communicates telepathically with the characters, asking their reasons for being in Aqen. Once (and if) the characters explain their reasons for traveling so far to the land of the dead, the being opens a gate back to their homeworld. It tells the characters that if they step through the gate and leave Aqen, when they arrive at their destination, they will have anything that they've ever wanted so long as it doesn't involve the return of a dead creature. This works as the *wish* spell, but with no ill effects.

Although the visage is an evil creature, it's honest in its offer. If the characters leave—all of the characters—and never return, it will grant each one a *wish*. If even one character refuses, it hisses and vanishes.

The Forest of Sorrow

Nothing lives in Aqen. But there is a "forest." This forest is a collection of black, leafless trees whose crowded branches twist and ache towards Aqen's black sky. Humanoid heads decorate the hollows of these trees. The heads constantly moan and weep. What few are capable of speech beg the characters for release.

When the characters first enter the forest, they must all make DC 20 Wisdom saving throws. If a character succeeds on their saving throw, they exit the forest. Otherwise, the character finds themselves in a deeper, darker part of the forest and must repeat their saving throw. If their second saving throw succeeds, they escape the forest but gain one form of short-term madness. If the second saving throw fails, the character falls even deeper into the forest. This time, they are incapacitated and their movement speed becomes 0. The skin on their hands and face starts to turn to dense, black bark. They must make one final DC 20 Wisdom saving throw. If they succeed on the third saving throw, they exit the forest, but their hit points drop to 1 and they gain one form of indefinite madness. If they fail the final saving throw, they magically polymorph into one of the forest's moaning trees where they remain for eternity. A *wish* spell will return them to their true form and remove them from the forest, but only if their allies can find them first—which they never will.



The Screaming Temple

At the edge of the forest of sorrow, a great temple of black stone stands on a hill made of writhing, decaying bodies—not quite dead, not quite alive. Red light pours out the temple's interior.

If the characters dare to enter this place of horror, they discover an altar of blood inside. And there, kneeling before the altar, is their lost companion. Their companion doesn't move and doesn't speak. They only stare ahead.

When the characters come within 10 feet of their friend or try to speak to them, a demonic force appears before them. The force has no shape. It is only an emotion. And it is terribly familiar.

It defies explanation. Perhaps it's that thing that lurks at the back of all mortal's minds, reminding us that our time in the universe is brief. So damn brief. Or maybe it's something that lives between the concepts of life and death. It's atrophy personified.

"Why are you here?" the formless entity hisses. "It is not yours to take."

The entity cannot be harmed. It *is* Aqen. If a character tries to attack it or hit it with a spell, they must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw. A target takes 21 (6d6) necrotic damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one.

The only avenue the characters have at this point is to try to convince their ally to return with them. To do so, the group must make a group DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check. Each character who recalls a fond memory of the ally can make this check with advantage. If half or more of the characters succeed on their check, their ally snaps out of their trance and decides to return with the characters. Otherwise, the ally thanks the characters for their efforts, but they have already accepted their fate. Nothing will ever change their mind.

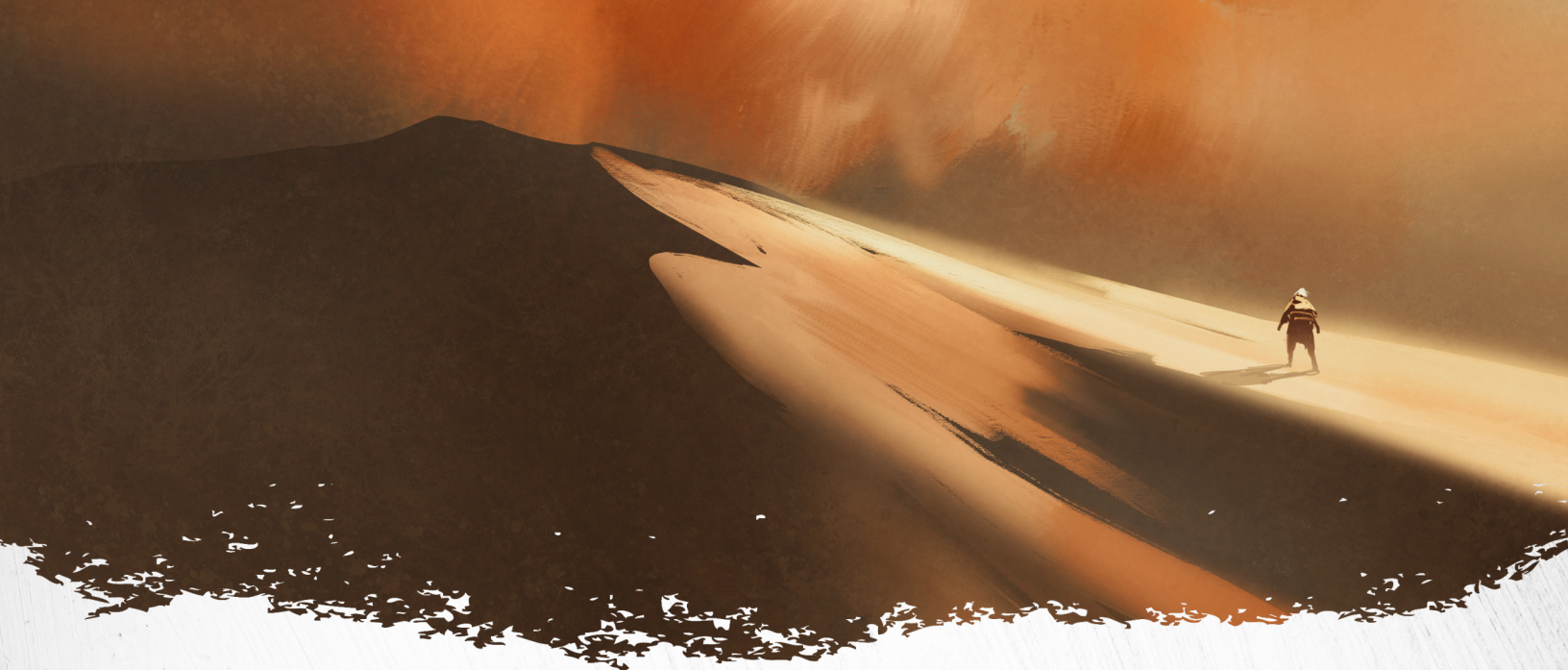
No One Leaves Aqen

If the characters' ally agrees to go back with them, the entity flies into a fit of rage. The plane itself attacks them. Each character must make a DC 10 Charisma saving throw. On a failed saving throw, a target sinks 1d4 + 1 feet into the plane itself and becomes restrained. At the start of each of the character's turns, it sinks another 1d4 feet. As long as the creature isn't completely submerged, it can escape by using its action and succeeding on a Charisma check. The DC is 10 plus the number of feet the creature has sunk into the plane. A creature that is completely submerged in the plane becomes part of Aqen forever.

A creature can convince another creature within 30 feet of it that can hear it to escape the plane by using its action and succeeding on a Charisma (Persuasion) check. The DC is 5 plus the number of feet the target creature has sunk into the plane.

Aftermath

If the characters somehow succeed on their mission and return to The Real with their friend intact, undoubtedly they are forever chanted by their trip to Aqen. Of course, it's much more likely that one or more of the characters—if not all of them—become permanent fixtures in Aqen, in which case there is nothing and no-one who will come to their aid. Ω



Naga

Suggested by talorien

Characters: 3-5 characters of 5th to 10th level

Synopsis: A vile creature called a naga guards a powerful treasure

Setting: A lost temple in the sands of Karnione.

Background

- Karnione was one of the first human civilizations in Omeria. It spanned nearly all of Central Omeria.
- A combination of The Transmuter Wars, a never-ending feud with Xenem Dynasty, and internal corruption led to Karnione's sudden demise in the 7th century.
- When The Wither devoured most of Central Omeria, nearly all of Karnione's great cities were swallowed by the desert's coarse sands.
- Great treasures still hide within the belly of Karnione's temples.
- Of course, many of these treasures are protected by ancient evils the likes of which Omeria hasn't seen in centuries.
- One such temple contains a naga, a vile creature whose existence predates even the danaavrakti.
- It's well-known through most adventuring circles that the naga guards an ancient artifact.
- The naga will grant possession of the artifact to anyone who can answer its riddle.
- Dozens have tried to answer its riddle. And so far, they have all failed.

Outline

The story should play out as follows:

Set-up

The characters seek a long lost artifact, the nature of which depends on your campaign. Thanks to some astute research and a few believable rumors, they learn that the artifact they seek is hidden in the ruins of Ovazdere, a destroyed Karnionic city.

Ovazdere

The ruins of Ovazdere's once proud towers poke out of The Wither's sands like the bleached bones of some dead animal. When the characters arrive, they discover that they aren't the only people there. Explorers, daredevils, mercenaries, and other thrill-seekers lurk in the ruins, all there for the same reason: they want the artifact.

As the characters look around, they see a group of mercenaries tear apart a camp. Two of them fight over a backpack while another one disassembles one of the tents and walks away with it. A woman screams at them, shouting, "You vultures! They haven't even been dead for ten minutes!" If the characters inquire about the situation, someone explains that "the naga" just killed another would-be group of heroes. Whenever that happens, the other adventurers at the camp quickly loot what they can from the dead folks' belongings.

Word Around the Campfire

Gossip pervades the ruins' various camps. If the characters take time to settle in, they can learn a few things by speaking to the other adventurers at the site. So long as the characters spend at least one hour speaking with others at the camp, one of them may make a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check to learn the actual question the naga poses to those who come before it. On a failure, the character receives false information. On a success, they learn that the naga asks everyone who comes before it a riddle that asks "who is your creator?"

No matter if the characters' Insight checks pass or fail, everyone in the camp says the same thing: if you fail to answer the naga's riddle, you die.

The Temple

The naga's temple is easy to find. It's unguarded, although bandits, tomb-raiders, and other adventurers lurk outside its entrance. They are all trying to gain the confidence to enter the temple and answer the naga's question. Emotions oscillate between excitement and abject terror.

Sand-covered steps lead down into a large dark chamber. The chamber is 30 feet wide and 100 feet long from the entrance to a grand dais at its far end. Two iron braziers flank

the dais, burning with eerie blue flame. It is upon this dais where the naga sits curled, its serpentine eyes reflecting the fires. Dozens of bodies decorate the chamber's stone floors. The corpses are fresh, their eyes gray and mouths frozen into exaggerated screams. All of them are the adventurers who came before the characters who failed to correctly answer the naga's question.

The first time the characters witness the naga, each one must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the target is unable to look the naga directly in the eyes.

The temple is protected by a permanent *private sanctum*, preventing the naga from being targeted by divination spells

The Naga

The naga is a **spirit naga** except it has a Wisdom score of 28 and it can cast *detect thoughts* and *power word kill* at will (Wisdom is its spellcasting modifier for these spells, spell save DC 19), the latter of which it only uses to destroy those who fail to correctly answer its riddle. If the characters attack the naga, it fights them, but it will never reveal the location of the hidden artifact. Once destroyed, the naga rejuvenates in 1d6 days, reappearing on its dais.

When the characters come within 15 feet of the naga's dais, it speaks directly to one of the characters.

“I am ageless.
I am divine.
I see beyond reality.
I see beyond time.

“Beyond your beginning
A false memory
Beyond your adventures
Someone else's story

“Beyond the charade
Of your endless strife
Beyond the numbers
That gave you life

“Tell me now
And tell me true
Who is your creator?
Who is the one who speaks through you?”

The naga waits patiently for an answer. If the character fails to give any other name than the player who created that character, the naga replies “no” and immediately casts *power word kill*, targeting the character. If the character gives the name of their player, the naga replies, “That is the one.” It then cast its head upward. With a resonating hum, the artifact which the characters seek blips into view, floating just a few feet off the temple's floor.

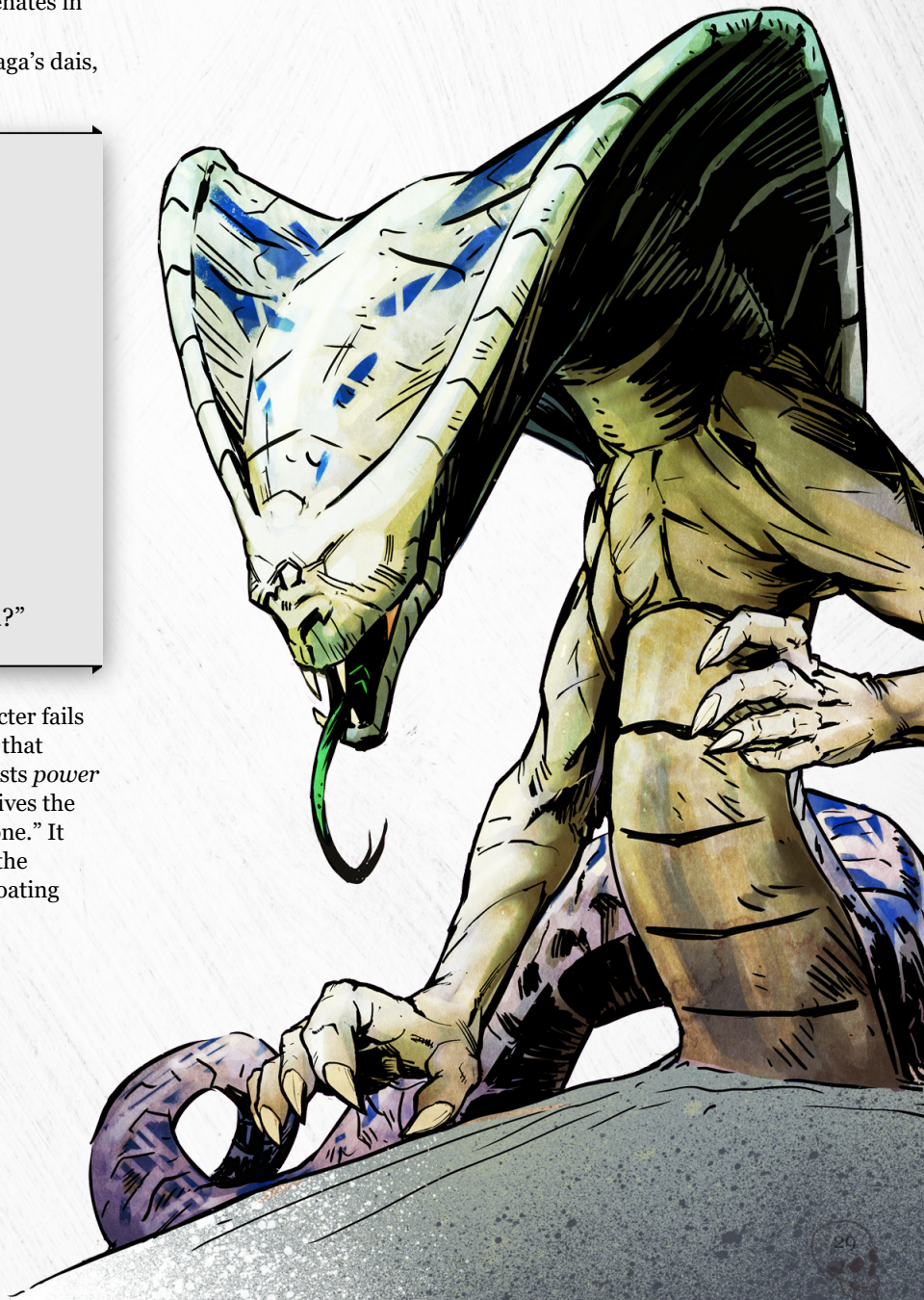
Once they take the artifact, the naga collapses into a pile of sand. A gust of wind rushes into the temple, extinguishing the blue flames and clearing the dais of the naga's remains.

Aftermath

If the characters successfully answer the naga's riddle and claim the artifact, they will be the talk of the camp. Many will want to know the answer they gave that satisfied the naga. Oddly, the character who correctly answered the riddle doesn't remember the reply they gave. It's as if the word they spoke is always at the tip of their tongue—but they just can't bring themselves to think it or say it.

Plenty of the other adventurers will be jealous of the characters' success, too. The party will need to watch their back for the next few weeks lest they meet their fate at the end of an envious assassin's blade.

Of course, if the characters didn't answer the naga's riddle correctly, they get to decorate the naga's temple floor. Fortunately, their respective creators will be able to generate new characters. Perhaps they will have a bit more luck than their predecessors? Ω



"Vengeance!" She Cried

Suggested by Lil Mrs Murder Inc

Characters: 3-5 characters of 5th to 10th level

Synopsis: Every night, Castle Largesse comes under attack from an army of rodents and insects

Setting: The village of Largesse near Knotside, Northern Omeria

Background

- Kyriakos Gabrakis and his family recently inherited the estate and titles of his dead uncle, Lord Puyro Largesse.
- Despite only being fifty years old, the noble Puyro seemingly died of natural causes.
- The first night the Gabrakis family stayed at Castle Largesse, a mob of rats invaded the castle. Gabrikis, his wife, and children fled before they were injured.
- A week later, the Gabrakis family returned. And that night, swarms of insects entered the castle, once more driving them from the estate.
- Just before the Gabrakis family rode away from the castle, Lord Gabrakis witnessed a woman all in white wandering through the Castle's courtyard.
- Her form was almost completely bathed in shadow, save for a wide cross of light across her face.
- "Vengeance!" she cried, pointing a crooked finger at Gabrikis.
- The ghost is a woman named Marlene Mordentshire.

The Ghost of Marlene Mordentshire

- Marlene was once a servant for the original Largesse family who lived in the castle over a century ago. Marlene was also involved in an affair with the first Lord Largesse, Puyro's grandfather, Oikos.
- One summer, Oikos sent his family away so his workers could complete renovations on the castle's western wing to rid it of a recent pest invasion thanks to poor construction.
- Tears in her eyes, it was there Marlene approached Oikos. Frustrated by the secrecy of their ongoing relationship, Marlene threatened to expose Oikos.
- During the altercation, Oikos accidentally shoved Marlene down. She hit her head on the stonework of the western wing's temple. Oikos thought she was dead.
- Afraid that Marlene's death would ruin his status as a noble in Knotside, Oikos bricked up the entrance to the temple.
- Just before he placed the last four bricks, he noticed that Marlene was conscious. A beam of light in the shape of a cross illuminated her face.
- Despite evidence she was alive, Oikos put the last four bricks into place, sealing Marlene into the old temple.
- Too weak to push the wall aside, Marlene lingered behind the wall for days. With the castle emptied, her weak screams went unheard.
- Inevitably, the rodents and insects from which Oikos hoped to rid the castle attacked Marlene and ate her alive.

Outline

The story should play out as follows:

Set-up

Frustrated by the strange occurrences assailing his new home, Lord Kyriakos Gabrakis contacts the characters, hoping they can rid his inheritance of the evils therein. If the characters agree to help, he suggests they spend the night in the castle.

The Castle Largesse

If the characters take Gabrakis up on their offer, he gives them full reign of the estate during his and his family's absence. The characters should spend some time investigating the castle. The clues listed below should inevitably lead them to Marlene's presence. Some of the clues will be discovered while searching the estate. Others are only revealed when the characters spend the night in the castle.

Rodent Attack. The first night the characters stay in the castle, they're attacked by **swarms of rats**. At first, only one or two rats attack. Then, 1d4 + 1 swarms of rats begin to pour into the castle's interior. Each round the characters continue their fight with the rats, roll a d10. On a result of 1 through 9, 1d4 more swarms join the fight. On a result of 10, no further swarms join the combat. If the characters flee the castle, the rats do not follow.

Insect Attack. The second night the characters stay in the castle, they're attacked by **swarms of insects**. Just like the rats, only a few spiders and centipedes attack initially. Then, 1d4 + 1 swarms of insects invade the castle. Just like before, roll a d10 to determine if 1d4 more swarms join the fight. From that point forward, the rodents and insects alternate each night. There never seems to be an end to their numbers.

Marlene Sighting. The second night the characters stay at the castle and every night thereafter, Marlene appears. Just as Gabrakis described her, Marlene looks like a woman wearing all white. Shadows consume her form except for a single perfect cross of light over her face. If the characters attempt to fight her, speak to her, or even come near her, she vanishes and won't return until the next night.

A character who sees Marlene and succeeds on a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices a few unusual things about Marlene. First, the tips of her fingers are bloodied, the bone exposed. Second, she has a large wound at the back of her head. Third, if the character has proficiency in the History skill or is familiar with Knotside social customs, they recognize that she is wearing a servant's dress.

Castle Library. If the characters take time to search the premises, they find a few interesting clues in the Castle's Library.

Old Books. A character who examines the books and succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (History or Investigation) check realizes that all of the books date back a hundred years or more.

Outdated Furniture. A character who noticed the old books may also make a DC 15 Intelligence (History) check. If they succeed on this check, they notice that all of the furniture in the castle is outdated, too. Furthermore, the paintings on the walls depict only Oikos Largesse. There are no paintings of his descendants anywhere in the castle.

Old Love Letter. A letter addressed to Oikos Largesse hides in a desk drawer. The letter reads, “Oikos, my love. I am excited to write this letter to you; thank you for teaching me my letters. I feel it is fitting that the first words I put to paper are my feelings for you. I love you completely. I spend every day imagining what our life would be like if things were different. I know she is very important to you. She is the Lady. And mother of two of your children. But I know that we are also important to you. I can’t wait to see you tonight. Truly yours, Marlene.”

External Research. If the characters do a little research outside of the castle, they might think to check the ownership records for the castle. After four hours spent going through records in Knotside’s property office (with a hefty bribe, of course), a character may make a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. The character adds +1 to the check for each additional hour they spend beyond the first four reading through the scrolls. On a success, the character learns that, while the estate has been successfully passed down between Largesse’s daughter Luna (Puyros’ mother), Puyros, and then Gabrakis, all of the previous lords lived away from the castle. Gabrakis is the first descendant to try to take up residence there.

If the characters found Marlene’s letter in the library, they may think to check the employment records at the Castle. Lo and behold, Marlene Mordentshire is listed as one of the castle’s servants. The records state that she quit.

Castle Blueprints. The castle’s blueprints are also stored in the office. If a character spends 1 minute or more examining the blueprints, they may make a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. Pass or fail, they learn nothing interesting from the blueprints. Regardless, record the result of their check. Then, each day the character prolongs their stay in the castle, add +1 to the recorded result. If the new total is equal to or greater than 15, the character immediately realizes that there is a room on the blueprints that is missing in the castle.

Mordentshires. If the characters follow up on the name Marlene Mordentshire, they learn that there is a family of Mordentshires that lives in Knotside. Relatively poor, all of the Mordentshires work as servants in various estates surrounding Knotside. While the name Marlene doesn’t immediately ring any bells for them, one of the oldest members of the Mordentshire family vaguely remembers that his grandfather’s mother’s name was Marlene. Supposedly, Marlene never came home one night, leaving her grandfather alone to be raised by Marlene’s parents. The Mordentshires do not expect they have any connection to Castle Largesse or the ghost there.

The Hidden Temple

Even if the characters don’t see the old blueprints and recognize the missing room, eventually, a character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 15 or better notices something strange on one of the walls in the western wing of the Castle. If there are no characters with passive Wisdom (Perception) scores that high, each day the characters spend in the castle, grant a secret +1 bonus to a character’s passive Wisdom (Perception) score related to spotting the wall.

Four bricks on the wall make a cross pattern similar to the one illuminating Marlene’s face. A character who succeeds on a DC 13 Intelligence (History) check recognizes that the 5-foot section of wall into which the cross is set was not originally part of the castle’s construction. The wall can be pushed down with a successful DC 18 Strength check. Otherwise, it has AC 18, 25 hit points (damage threshold 5), and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

The wall conceals the west wing’s old hidden temple. There, still slumped against the altar, rests the corpse of Marlene Mordentshire. Dessicated rat and insect corpses surrounding her reveal the cause of her gruesome death.

Vengeance She Got

The presence of Marlene Mordentshire’s body is enough to warrant an investigation into the Largesse estate by Knotside’s authorities. Castings of *Speak with Dead* and other divination spells reveal Marlene’s cause of death. Furthermore, the authorities learn that Marlene gave birth to Oikos’ only son, Theo. By Knotside law, this means that the Largesse Estate should have been passed down to Theo instead of Theo’s half-sister Luna. The modern Mordentshires are the true heirs of Castle Largesse and the Largesse fortune

Aftermath

Although Gabrikis is disappointed that his uncle’s estate reverts back to the Mordentshires, he is happy the characters brought justice to Marlene and her descendants. Gabrikis denounces his uncle’s family name. “Besides,” Gabrikis assures the characters, “I’m already a wealthy man. If anything, my uncle’s holdings felt like an unnecessary headache.”

Before the characters depart for their next quest, the Mordentshires invite them back to the estate to thank them for their help. It has already been a week, and the Mordentshires haven’t seen a single rat or insect anywhere on the castle grounds. The Mordentshires pay the characters a healthy gold reward for their efforts and tell them that they will always be in the characters’ debt for changing their lives.

Just as the characters turn to leave, they see the ghost of Marlene Mordentshire one last time. This time, her entire form is bathed in light. Her face is once more full of life and joy. Just behind her, the spirits of her descendants—her son, the grandson she never met, and others—all wait for her. Finally, she turns and walks away, then fades from view. Ω

Appendix: New Creatures

"The Rider" Mhambi

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (studded leather), or 17 (while mounted on a lumbibike)

Hit Points 120 (16d8 + 48)

Speed 30 ft. (120 ft. on a lumbibike)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +7, Dex +6

Damage Resistances psychic

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, poisoned

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 12

Languages understands Common but can't speak

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Lumbibike. Mhambi is mounted on a lumibike, a vehicle. While mounted, Mhambi's movement speed is 120 ft. and he gains half cover. Mhambi can use his action to mount or dismount the bike. The bike can be targeted. It has AC 19, 30 hp (damage threshold 5), and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

Jump (While Mounted on Lumbibike Only). If Mhambi moves at least 30 feet in a straight line, he can clear a distance of up to 60 feet when jumping over a chasm, ravine, or other gap. Each foot he clears on the jump costs a foot of movement.

Vorpal Charge. If Mhambi moves at least 30 feet in a straight line toward a target and then hits it with a longsword attack on the same turn, Mhambi deals an extra 13 (3d8) slashing damage if he rolls 18 or less on the attack roll. If Mhambi rolls a 19 or 20 on the attack roll, Mhambi cuts off one of the creature's heads. The creature dies if it can't survive without the lost head. A creature is immune to this effect if it is immune to slashing damage, doesn't have or need a head, has legendary actions, or the GM decides that the creature is too big for its head to be cut off with this weapon. Such a creature instead takes an extra 6d8 slashing damage from the hit.

Actions

Multiattack. Mhambi makes two attacks with his longsword.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage or 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage if wielded with two hands.

Overrun. If Mhambi moves at least 30 feet as part of his movement, he can then use his action to enter a Medium or smaller creature's space. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength or Dexterity saving throw (target's choice) or be knocked prone and take 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage plus 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage. On a successful save, the creature takes only half the damage, isn't knocked prone, and is pushed 5 feet out of Mhambi's way into an unoccupied space of the creature's choice. If no unoccupied space is within range, the creature instead falls prone in Mhambi's space.

Headless Runner

Medium undead, neutral

Armor Class 12 (armor scraps)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)	7 (-2)

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, poisoned

Senses passive Perception 7

Languages —

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Headless. The runner automatically fails any ability check that requires hearing or sight. Attack rolls made against the runner are made with advantage and the runner's attack rolls have disadvantage.

Actions

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

Necrembryo

Large undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 22 (natural armor)

Hit Points 345 (30d10 + 180)

Speed 5 ft., fly 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	15 (+2)	22 (+6)	18 (+4)	22 (+6)	30 (+10)

Saving Throws Dex +10, Con +14, Wis +14

Skills Arcana +12, Perception +22

Damage Resistances cold, fire

Damage Immunities psychic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, prone

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 32

Languages all, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 27 (105,000 XP)

Immutable Form. The necrembryo is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

Innate Spellcasting. The necrembryo uses Charisma as its spellcasting modifier (spell save DC 26, +18 to hit with spell attacks). It can cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *animated dead*, *create undead*, *cone of cold*, *dispel magic*, *finger of death*, *greater invisibility*, *plane shift*, *speak with dead*

5/day each: *haste*, *project image*, *weird*

Inscrutable. The necrembryo is immune to any effect that would sense its emotions or read its thoughts, as well as any divination spell that it refuses. Wisdom (Insight) checks made to ascertain the necrembryo's intentions or sincerity have disadvantage.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the necrembryo fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Magic Resistance. The necrembryo has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Negative Energy Aura. A field of negative energy extends from the necrembryo 30 feet in all directions. When an undead creature starts its turn in this area, it regains 10 hit points and becomes immune to effects that turn undead until the start of its next turn. Living creatures that enter the aura or start their turn in the area take 10 necrotic damage and must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the target takes one level of exhaustion. If the target dies from exhaustion while within the necrembryo's negative energy aura, it raises as a wight in 1 minute under the necrembryo's control.

Regeneration. The necrembryo regains 20 hit points at the start of each of its turns. If the necrembryo takes radiant damage, this trait does not function at the start of its turn. The necrembryo is only destroyed if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Actions

Multiattack. The necrembryo makes three Touch of Death Attacks or three Eye Ray attacks.

Touch of Death. Melee Spell Attack: +18 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 55 (10d8 + 10) necrotic damage. The target must make a DC 26 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken.

Eye Ray. Ranged Spell Attack: +18 to hit, range 240 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 28 (4d8 + 10) necrotic damage. The target must make a DC 26 Constitution saving throw. On a failed saving throw, the target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken.

Legendary Actions

The necrembryo can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The necrembryo regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Move. The necrembryo moves up to half its movement speed.

Spell (Costs 3 Actions). The necrembryo casts one of its innate spells.

Necromancer

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment

Armor Class 12 (15 with *mage armor*)
Hit Points 40 (9d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +6, Wis +4
Skills Arcana +6, Religion +6
Senses passive Perception 11
Languages any four languages
Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Spellcasting. The necromancer is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The necromancer has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*
1st level (4 slots): *detect magic*, *false life*, *mage armor*, *shield*
2nd level (3 slots): *misty step*, *ray of enfeeblement*
3rd level (3 slots): *animate dead*, *counterspell*, *fireball*
4th level (3 slots): *blight*, *greater invisibility*
5th level (1 slot): *cone of cold*

Actions

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Chill Touch (Cantrip). *Ranged Spell Attack:* +6 to hit, range 120 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 9 (2d8) necrotic damage. The target can't regain hit points until the start of the necromancer's next turn. If the target is undead, it also has disadvantage on attack rolls against the necromancer until the end of the necromancer's next turn.

Undead Nature. The necrowing does not require air, food, drink, or sleep.

Necrowing

Huge undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)
Hit Points 230 (20d12 + 100)
Speed 30 ft., fly 90 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	5 (-3)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +4, Con +9, Wis +4
Skills Perception +8
Damage Immunities necrotic, poison
Condition Immunities poisoned
Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 18
Languages understands Draconic but can't speak
Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Two Heads. The necrowing has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks and on saving throws against being blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, and knocked unconscious.

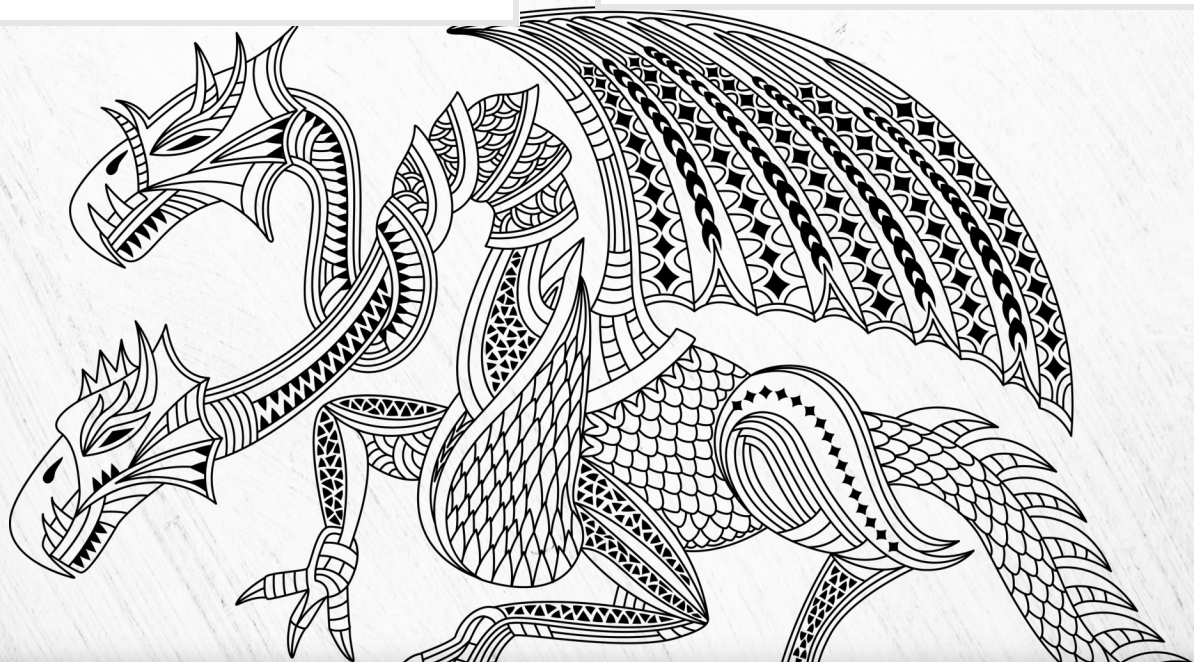
Actions

Multiattack. The necrowing makes four attacks: two with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d10 + 6) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage.

Necrotic Breath (Recharge 4-6). The necrowing exhales two 30-foot cones or one 60-foot cone of negative energy. Each creature within one of the cones must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw, taking 45 (10d8) necrotic damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature in the area of more than one necrotic cone is affected only once.



Oculoid

Medium aberration, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13
Hit Points 22 (4d8 + 4)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	9 (-1)

Skills Perception +6
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 6
Languages telepathy up to 120 ft.
Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Keen Sight. The oculoid has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Actions

Slash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Oculoid Hypnosis (1/Day). The oculoid creates a 30-foot cone of hypnotic colors. Each creature in the area who sees the colors must make a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature becomes charmed for as long as the oculoid maintains concentration (as if concentrating on a spell), up to 1 minute. While charmed by this effect, the creature is incapacitated and has a speed of 0, and the target must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw at the start of each of its turns. On a failed saving throw, the target contracts oculoid spawn, a disease. While infected, the target has disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight. Also, 24 hours after the creature contracts the disease, its eyes gain sentience, push themselves out of the creature's skull, and become oculoid tadpoles. When this happens, the target takes 5 (2d4) necrotic damage and becomes permanently blinded. If the disease is cured before the eyeball enucleate, the target's eyeballs do not gain sentience. A *regenerate* spell or similar magic can replace the target's missing eyes.

The charmed effect ends for an affected creature if it takes any damage or if someone else uses an action to shake the creature out of its stupor. A target that succeeds on its saving throw or the effect ends for it is immune to the oculoid's oculoid hypnosis for 24 hours. If the target contracted oculoid spawn during the hypnosis, ending the charmed effect early on it does not cure its disease.

Oculoid Swarm

Medium swarm of Tiny aberrations, unaligned

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 36 (8d8)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	4 (-3)	11 (+0)	5 (-3)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +6
Damage Vulnerabilities bludgeoning
Damage Resistances piercing, slashing
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages telepathy up to 30 ft.
Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Keen Sight. The swarm has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

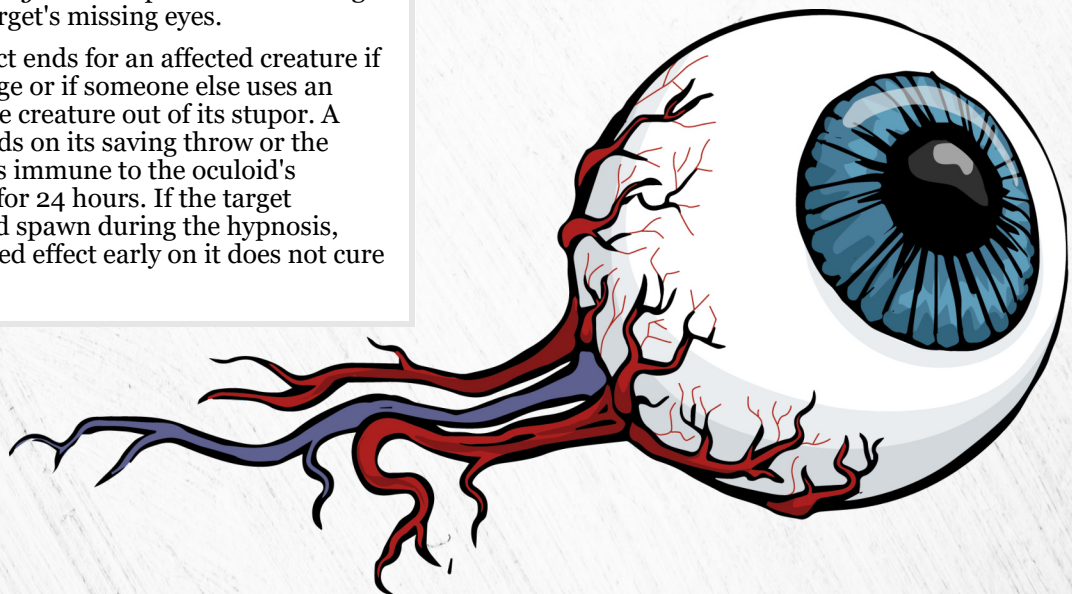
Ooze Puddle. The oculoid swarm creates a trail of ooze. Any creature that starts its turn standing in the same space as the swarm must make a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny oculoid tadpole. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

Actions

Multiattack. The swarm makes two slashes attacks. The swarm can only use this action if it has more than half its hit points.

Slashes. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 0 ft., one creature in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 9 (2d4 + 4) slashing damage.



Oculoid Tadpole

Tiny aberration, unaligned

Armor Class 14
Hit Points 2 (1d4)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	4 (-3)	11 (+0)	5 (-3)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +6
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 14
Languages telepathy up to 30 ft.
Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Keen Sight. The tadpole has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Actions

Slash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the same space as the tadpole.
Hit: 1 slashing damage.

Orner Wrerros

Small humanoid (gnome), chaotic evil

Armor Class 12
Hit Points 55 (10d6 + 20)
Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Int +7, Wis +4
Skills Arcana +7
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11
Languages Common, Gnomish
Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Gnome Cunning. Orner has advantage on all Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws made against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

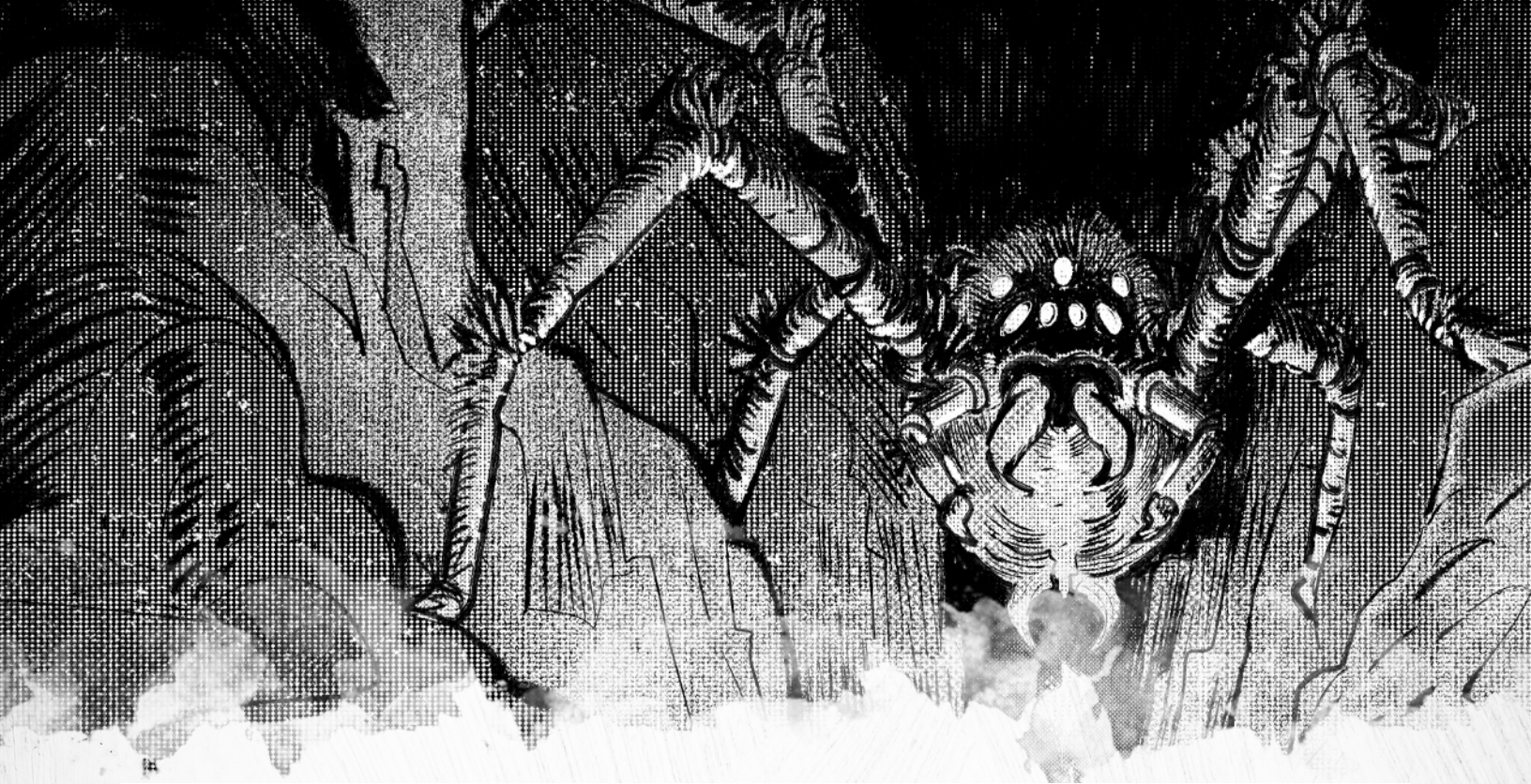
Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

Disintegration Rifle (Recharge 6). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 100 ft., one target. *Hit:* 75 (10d6 + 40) force damage. The target is disintegrated if this damage leaves it with 0 hit points.

A disintegrated creature and everything it is wearing and carrying, except magic items, are reduced to a pile of fine gray dust. The creature can be restored to life only by means of a *true resurrection* or a *wish* spell.

This weapon automatically disintegrates a Large or smaller nonmagical object or a creation of magical force. If the target is a Huge or larger object or creation of force, this attack disintegrates a 10-foot-cube portion of it. A magic item is unaffected by this attack.





Spider Queen

Huge fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 207 (18d12 + 90)

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	15 (+2)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	9 (-1)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Int +6

Skills Perception +11

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning

Damage Immunities poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 21

Languages Abyssal

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The spider queen's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). It can cast the following spells without requiring material components:

At will: *detect magic*, *detect thoughts*

1/day: *dominate person*

Magic Resistance. The spider queen has advantage on saving throws against spells and magical effects.

Magic Weapons. The spider queen's weapon attacks are magical.

Spider Climb. The spider queen can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

Web Sense. While in contact with a web, the spider queen knows the exact location of any other creature in contact with the same web.

Web Walker. The spider queen ignores movement restrictions caused by webbing.

Actions

Multiattack. The spider queen can use its Web if it is available. The spider queen then makes one slam attack and one bite attack.

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit* 13 (2d8 + 4) piercing damage. The target must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the poison damage reduces the target to 0 hit points, the target is stable but poisoned for 1 hour, even after regaining hit points, and is paralyzed while poisoned in this way.

Slam. Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (3d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Web (Recharge 5-6). Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, range 40/80 ft., one target. *Hit:* The target is restrained by webbing. As an action, the restrained target can make a DC 17 Strength check, bursting the webbing on a success. The webbing can also be attacked and destroyed (AC 15; hp 15; vulnerability to radiant damage; immunity to bludgeoning, poison, and psychic damage).

Undead Chanter

Medium undead, lawful neutral

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poison

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

Languages the languages it knew in life (usually Common)

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Innate Spellcasting. The undead chanter's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). It can cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *chill touch*

3/day each: *animate dead*, *hypnotic pattern*

Turn Resistance. The undead chanter has advantage on saving throws against effects that turn undead.

Actions

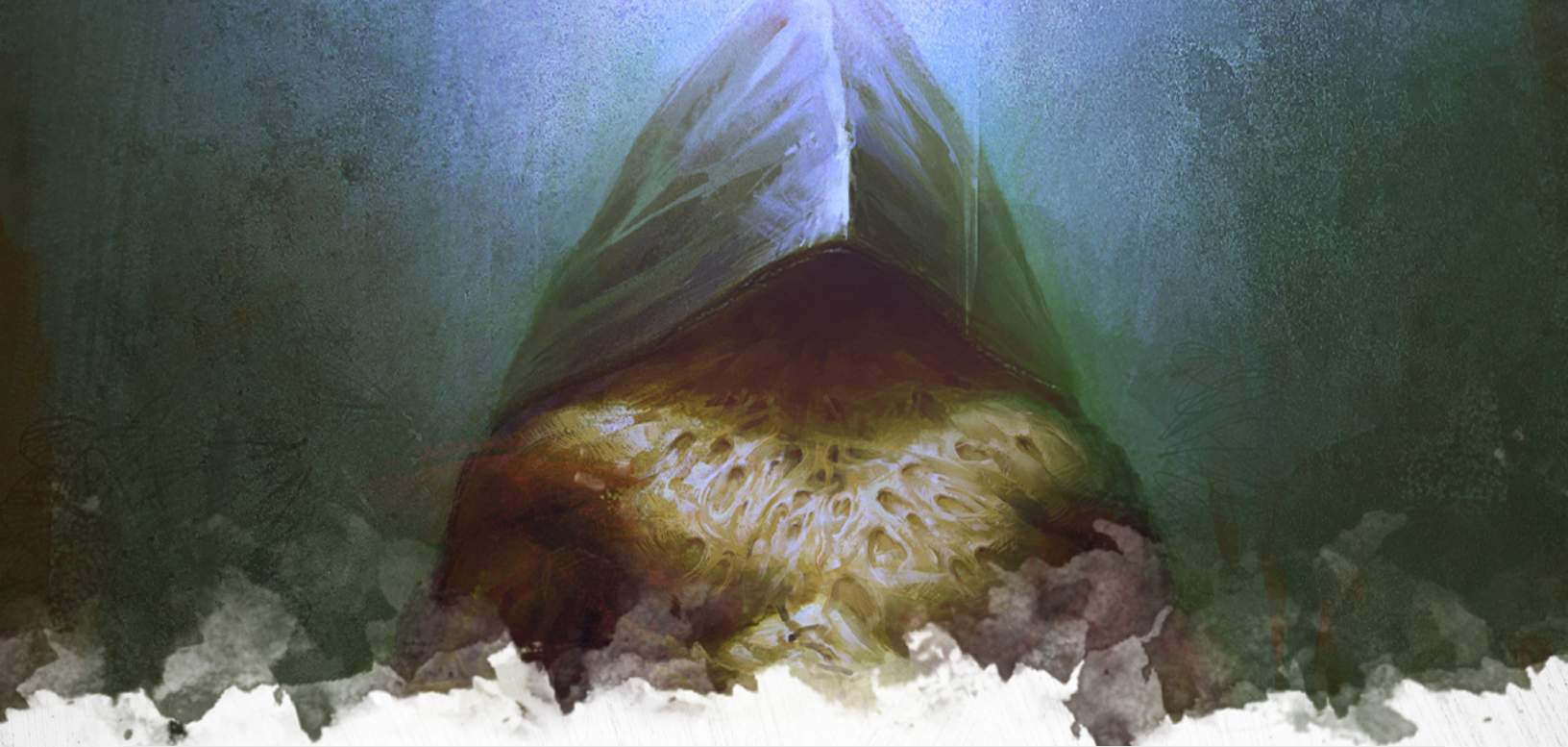
Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) bludgeoning damage.

Chorus of Woe. The chanter sings a magical melody. Each creature with the Chorus of Woe feature within 30 feet of the undead chanter, including the undead chanter, gains a +1 bonus to its spell save DC and spell attack bonuses. A creature can gain the benefits of this action from multiple creatures up to a maximum bonus of +5. The undead chanter must take a bonus action on its subsequent turns to continue singing. It can stop singing at any time. The song ends if the undead chanter is incapacitated.

While the undead chanter sings, it cannot speak or cast spells with verbal components.

Chill Touch (Cantrip). *Ranged Spell Attack:* +5 to hit, range 120 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d8) necrotic damage. The target can't take regain hit points until the start of the undead chanter's next turn. Undead hit by this spell have disadvantage on attack rolls made against the undead chanter until the start of its next turn.





Visage

Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 22 (natural armor)

Hit Points 90 (12d12 + 12)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +11, Perception +5, Performance +11, Stealth +8

Damage Resistances radiant; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silvered weapons

Damage Immunities acid, poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Abyssal, Common

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Innate Spellcasting (1/Day). The visage casts *dominate person*. Charisma is its spellcasting ability for this spell (spell save DC 15).

Magic Resistance. The visage has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The visage deals an extra 21 (6d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the visage that isn't incapacitated and the visage doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Visage Spawn. An evil celestial, elemental, fey, or fiend killed by the visage returns as a visage in 24 hours. The new spawn is under the command of the visage that created them and remains enslaved until destroyed.

Actions

Multiattack. The visage makes two claw attacks.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Lucidity Control. The visage creates a major image, similar to the *major image* spell, except that only one target selected by the visage can perceive the illusion. Charisma is its spellcasting ability for this effect (spell save DC 15).

Bonus Actions

Assume Identity. When a visage kills a Medium or Small humanoid, it can use its bonus action to magically polymorph into the humanoid it killed. It gains the proficiencies of the creature it killed and has advantage on Charisma (Deception and Performance) checks made to impersonate the assumed identity. Otherwise, its statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. The change lasts for 24 hours or until the visage uses its bonus action to change back into its true form or to assume another identity. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

While the visage has assumed the identity of a creature, that creature cannot be returned to life except by a true resurrection spell, which immediately reverts the visage to its true form. If the visage remains in the target's form for the full 24 hours, the target cannot be returned to life except with a *wish* spell or similar effect.



Woxect

Large aberration (shapechanger), neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 120 (16d8 + 48)

Speed 20 ft. (30 ft. in humanoid form)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)	21 (+5)	22 (+6)

Skills Deception +12, Insight +11, Persuasion +12

Damage Resistances fire

Damage Immunities cold

Condition Immunities paralyzed

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Deep Speech, Woxect

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Shapechanger. The woxect can use its action to polymorph into a Small or Medium humanoid it has seen, or back into its true form. Its statistics, other than its size, are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Innate Spellcasting (Psionics). The woxect's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). It can cast the following spells, requiring no components when it does:

At will: *detect magic*, *detect thoughts*, *mage hand* (the hand is invisible), *minor illusion*
3/day each: *animate dead*, *create undead*, *vampiric touch*

Magic Resistance. The woxect has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Regeneration. The woxect regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn so long as it has at least 1 hit point.

Suggestive Voice (Humanoid Form Only). The woxect has advantage on Charisma checks made to interact with all humanoids except for those immune to the charmed condition.

Actions

Multiattack. The woxect makes one bite attack and eight claw attacks, or two attacks with its club.

Bite (True Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) piercing damage. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or become poisoned for 1 hour. If the target fails its saving throw by 5 or more, it is blinded while it is poisoned.

Claw (True Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) slashing damage.

Club (Humanoid Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d4 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

Light Crossbow (Humanoid Form Only). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage.

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